



R. White sculp

Benjamin Whichcote S. S. T. Professor



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SEVERAL
DISCOURSES:

CONCERNING

The Shortness of Humane Charity.
The Perfection of the Mercy of God.
The Difference of Times with respect to Religion.
The Joy which the Righteous have in God.
The Secret Blasting of Men.
The Instructive Discipline of God.
The Danger of Unfaithfulness to God.
The Malignity of Popery.
The Deceitfulness of Sin.
The Conversion of a Sinner.

ALSO

The *Prayer* used before Sermon.

By the Reverend and Learned
BENJAMIN WHICHCOTE, D. D.

SOMETIME

Minister of S. *Lawrence Jewry*, *London*.

Examined and Corrected by his own Notes; and
Published by JOHN JEFFERTY, D. D. Arch-
deacon of *Norwich*.

The Second Edition.

L O N D O N,

Printed for James Knapton, at the Crown in
St. Paul's Church-Yard: 1702.

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To the Honourable
Sir PAUL WHICHCOTE
Knight and Baronet.

SIR,

YOU being the Chief of that Family, from which the Doctor receiv'd Honour, by his Extraction; and to which he did Honour, by his Worth; I could not find any one more fit to whom I might Dedicate these Discourses of his, than your Self.

I am well assured that no greater Service can be done to Religion, than to make Publick, True, Wise
A 3 and

Epistle Dedicatory.
and Honourable Representations of it;
such as are contained in the following
Sermons.

For the Reverend and Learned Author, through the Advantage of just Freedom, a strong Judgment, and an unfeigned Piety, has established such a Notion of Christianity from the Holy Scriptures, according to the Moral Perfections of God, as cannot possibly be False, and has laid his Foundation of Religion so deep in the Nature, Reason, and Necessity of Things, that it cannot possibly be subverted.

After the great Design of doing Service to the Interest of Religion, and the Souls of Men, my Care has been to do Right to the Doctor's Memory; and I hope the Pains I have taken in comparing
ring

Epistle Dedicatory.

ring Copies, and correcting what I have published, by his own Notes, will secure me against the Suspicion of Neglect in that Matter.

The Nature of the Discourses, recommend them effectually to every one, that is a competent Judge: Such an one was the late most Reverend Archbishop Tillotson, who on all Occasions expressed a very high Esteem of the Reverend Author.

This Account I give of my Undertaking, to you whose Name I have taken the liberty to use in this Dedication: And as 'tis my Veneration for the Author which induceth me to inscribe his Labours to you, so I trust, you will, on his Account, to whom I was not unknown, accept the

Epistle Dedicatory.

*Respect which is designed, and
pardon the Liberty which is taken
by,*

S I R,

Your most Humble Servant,

JOHN JEFFERY.

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BOOKS

BOOKS Printed for J. Knapton, at
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Several Discourses; Concerning the Shortness of Humane Charity. The Perfection of the Mercy of God. The Difference of Times with respect to Religion. The Joy which the Righteous have in God. The Secret Blasting of Men. The Instructive Discipline of God. The Danger of Unfaithfulness to God. The Malignity of Popery. The Deceitfulness of Sin. The Conversion of a Sinner. Also, the Prayer used before Sermon. Vol. I.

—Several Discourses; concerning the true Valuation of Man. The Necessary Repentance of a Sinner. The Exercise and Progress of a Christian. The Frailty of Humane Nature. The Justice of one towards another. The Nature of Salvation by Christ, &c. Being Twenty Sermons. Vol. II. Both by the Reverend and Learned *Benjamin Whichcote*, D. D. sometime Minister of St. *Lawrence Jury*, London. Examined and Corrected by his own Notes; and Published by *John Jeffery*. D. D. Archdeacon of *Norwich*.

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DISCOURSE I.

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JONAH iv. 1, 2.

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ciful, slow to anger, and of great
kindness, and repentest thee of the
Evil.

BUT *it displeased Jonah exceedingly,* Disc. I
and he was very angry.] And what is
the matter, that a good Man, an extra-
ordinary Person, a Prophet, yea of all
B the

Vol. I. the Prophets a Type of Christ, in whom
 ~~~~~ our Saviour doth instance: That he is  
 so much offended, and that he is so  
 very angry? We may imagine doubtless  
 some very great cause, something  
 mightily amiss, and out of order: No  
 less certainly than one of these three  
 things.

I. Certainly here is some great *disho-  
 nour to God*. Here is some sure that de-  
 clare for Atheism, Prophaneness, and Ir-  
 religion; that hath so provok'd the Spi-  
 rit of the good Man. As we find good  
*Hezekiah*, he rent his Cloaths, and fell  
 into a grievous Passion upon *Rabshekeh's*  
 Blasphemy, and reviling the God of  
 Heaven, and comparing him with Idol  
 Gods. *Have any of the Gods of the Na-  
 tions*, saith he, *delivered his Land out of*  
*my hands, that the Lord should deliver*  
*Jerusalem out of my hand*, Isa. 36. 18,  
 19, &c.

Or certainly, here is some uncircum-  
 cised *Philistine* that is risen up to defy  
 the Host of *Israel*; which was such a  
 provocation to *David*, that upon it he  
 put his Life into his hand, and went  
 out against him, as you read, 1 Sam.  
 17. 39, 40, &c.

Or

## Humane Charity.

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Or certainly here is some *Baal's Wor-* Disc. I.  
ship maintain'd and applauded; which  
was a provocation to *Elijah's* Spirit, that  
he commanded them to be taken and  
slain every Man of them, 1 *Kings* 18.40.

Or certainly one would think, that  
here was such a thing as *false Worship*;  
which was such a provocation to *Moses*,  
that made him throw down the Tables  
which were in his Hands, in which were  
writ the Commandments of God; and  
to break them to pieces; as you find it,  
*Exod.* 32. 19. Or,

2. Some great *Enormity* or *Depar-*  
*ture* from the immutable and unchange-  
able Law of Everlasting Righteousness,  
Goodness, and Truth; that Law of  
Heaven, which is according to the very  
Nature of God himself. As *Nathan* re-  
presented to *David*, a Case wherein a  
rich Man spared his own Flocks and  
Herds, which were very many; and  
took the poor Man's Ewe Lamb, which  
he had nourished up, as you may read,  
2 *Sam.* 12. 1, 2. Prodigious Cruelty and  
Unmercifulness! Yea, so great Unrighte-  
ousness, that at the very Representation  
thereof to *David*, though a Person  
Guilty, and he himself represented by  
this Shadow, as having highly offended

B 2

God;



Vol. I. God; yet his Anger was greatly kindled against the Man, insomuch that he saith to *Nathan*, *The Man that hath done this thing shall surely dye.*

Or else certainly here is some such thing as the *Israelites* meditated against the *Benjamites*, when they lay in wait to destroy them, *Joshua* 2. 2. Because they had set up a new Temple, and provoked the Lord by their Folly.

Or something like what St. *John* saw in his Vision, *Rev.* 17. 2. *A Spiritual Whore making drunk all the Potentates of the Earth, with the Wine of her Fornications.* True causes indeed of Indignation, and of just Exasperation. Or

3. If neither of these two, at least there is some dreadful *Denunciation of Judgment*, and some terrible Threatnings, at which the very Nature of Man doth startle and tremble; as you have our Saviour speaking *Matt.* 24. concerning the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, that there should not be one Stone left upon another which should not be thrown down.

Or such Commission as was granted to *Saul* to destroy *Amaleck*, and not to leave either Man or Beast alive. And so certainly one would think that the Prophet is moved by Humane Pity and Compassion

passion, as *Zipporah* was at the Circum-  
cision of the Child. *Exod.* 4. 25. Disc. I.

Or certainly here is such *Cruelty* as is practised upon the Cities of *Ammon*, *2 Sam.* 12. 31. where we read, that *David brought forth the People that were therein, and put them under Saws and Harrows of Iron, and Axes of Iron, and made them pass through the Brick-kiln, &c.* One would not think, nor imagine less to be the Cause, that *Jonah* was so highly displeased, and greatly angry.

But here is the wonder; nothing that is any *just* Cause; indeed there is no cause at all of any true Offence, or real Provocation. 'Tis a shame to say, what is the Cause. The good Man is displeased with God himself, and he is offended at the Divine Goodness and Compassion; and that God hath respect to the Repentance of Sinners. For so I find it, at the end of the foregoing Chapter, *And God saw their Works that they turned from their evil way, and God repented of the Evil that he had said that he would do unto them, and he did it not,* *Jonah* 3. 10. And immediately it follows, that when *Jonah* understood this, he was highly displeased and greatly angry. But strange it is, that he should be an

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gry;

Vol. I. grieve at this; for this is a thing contrary  
 ~~~~~ to the sense of the *lower* and *upper World*.

1st. Contrary to the sense of the *lower World*. For we find that the Shepherd Rejoiceth when he had found his lost Sheep, *Luke 15. 5.* And, *ver. 9.* the Woman Rejoiceth when she had found her lost Piece of Silver. And the Father Rejoiceth when his Prodigal Son returned home again, *ver. 20.*

2^{dly}. Contrary to the sense of the *upper World*. For we read that the Angels of Heaven they Rejoyce at the Conversion and Repentance of one Sinner, *ver. 10.*

But we have now found the Man, of whom it is spoken in the Gospel, that *his Eye was evil, because God's was good*, *Matt. 20. 15.* He doth prefer his own conceited Credit and Esteem before the Lives and Beings of Sixscore thousand Persons; for so God himself hath given us the number of them, *ver. 11.* of this Chapter. And I will say *conceited Credit*, because God himself hath given us to understand, that all his Denunciations against Sinners are to be understood with a Clause of Reservation; and he doth always except this case, *If the Sinner repent.* Though his Denunciations seem

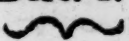
Humane Charity.

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seem to be Positive and Peremptory, yet Disc. I. they always include this Condition, unless the Sinner do Repent. As I will shew you by three Scriptures for the present, among many. Jer. 18. 8. where God saith thus, *That if he doth declare against a Nation or People, if that Nation or People against whom he hath denounced Evil, turn from the Evil of their ways, he will repent of the evil he thought to do unto them.* And Ezek. 18. 21. *If the Wicked turn from his evil way, and set himself to observe my Statutes, and do that which is right in my sight, all his Wickedness shall not be remembered against him.* Again, Ezek. 33. 14. *When I say to the Wicked thou shalt surely dye; if he turn from his Wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall not dye.* Though God had said it before, that *the Wicked should surely dye.* But thus he would have it be understood, that if he forsake his Iniquity, he *shall surely live.* And ver. 19. you have the same Words. These Scriptures I have brought you for the Encouragement of Men to repent, and to leave off to Sin, and to return to their Duty, and to convert to God, be their Case never so forlorn and desperate. For what can more Encourage him, then that Judg-

Vol. I. ment shall be suspended, and the Repen-
 ~~~~~ ting Sinner received unto Mercy and Fa-  
 vour. You see God doth make this De-  
 claration, even after his Denunciation of  
 Judgment ; if the Case of Repentance  
 come between, then God is not bound  
 to proceed. And for your satisfaction  
 further, I leave this Notion with you.  
 There is a mighty difference between  
 God's declaring himself in a way of  
*Promise*, and in a way of *Threatning* :  
 If he declares by way of Promise, he is  
 obliged to make it good ; for by this he  
 gives a *Right* to the thing promised ; and  
 Men may claim as a good Title from God's  
 Promise, though of grace and favour.  
 For God is faithful, and he will perform  
 what he hath promised. But if he  
*Threaten*, here is no Right acquired ; for  
 who will demand of God that he will  
 fulfil his Threatings ?

But to proceed. That which makes  
 the Wonder the greater ; *Jonah* whom  
 we find in this Distemper, is of all the  
 Prophets the *Type of Christ*. Our Savi-  
 our instanceth in him, *There shall no  
 Sign be given, but the Sign of the Prophet  
 Jonah, Matt. 12. 40.* I am sure in this  
 Temper and Disposition of his, he is no  
 Type of Christ ; For our Saviour doth  
 declare,

declare, that the Son of Man came to Disc. I.  
seek and to save that which was lost, *Luk.*   
19.20. *And he wept over Jerusalem*, when  
he did but consider the Destruction that  
was approaching. But this temper of  
*Jonah's* admits of no Apology. This  
Selfishness that is in *Jonah*, and his pre-  
ferring his own conceited Credit, before  
the Safety of Multitudes; I say, this ad-  
mits of no Apology. You may see  
it in *five Particulars*;

1. That nothing is more *unreasonable*  
*in it self*. Should not finite and fallible  
Creatures ( as the best of Men are ) ha-  
ving Erred and Mistaken, if they return  
to sober Judgment, right Apprehensi-  
ons, see their Error, and disclaim what  
they have done amiss, humble them-  
selves, ask God forgiveness, and sub-  
mit to him, and deprecate his displea-  
sure; should not such find Mercy with  
infinite Goodness? There is nothing  
more reasonable.

2. *Nothing is worse for Jonah himself,*  
*and the whole World besides him.* For  
what should become of us all, if there  
were no place for Repentance; And for  
*Jonah* himself, how shall he be pardon-  
ed for his present Distemper, if God  
should not allow place for Repentance?

3. *Nothing*



Vol. I. 3. *Nothing is more unnatural in respect of his Office.* For by his Office, he was a *Prophet*; and, Was it not his work to promote Repentance and Reformation among Sinners? And should this be without effect? But,

4. *Nothing worse can be put upon God,* than to be Represented Implacable and Irreconcilable. Will he have God full of Anger, and retain it for ever? Would he have God forget to be Merciful?

5. *And Lastly, This would render Men hopeless and desperate in the World.* 'Tis pity *Jonah's* Notion should be true. What, no place for Repentance; and Repentance without Effect? What, all one with the Impenitent and Penitent? This is the Case; but this is not the first Distemper that we find *Jonah* in.

For if we look to *Jonah*,

1. We shall find *Jonah* in great Refractoriness and Disobedience. God sends him to *Nineveh*, and he goes to *Tarsish*, *Jonah* 1. 3.

2dly. We shall find him *stupid* and *sensless*, and more blockish than the Idolatrous Marriners; and of them, they use to say, *None nearer Death, none farther from God.* These stupid Persons learned this in the Storm, to apply to their

their Gods; and *they* came and awakened him with Indignation, and said unto him, *What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise and call upon thy God; Art thou not sensible of the danger that thou art in?* Jonah 1. 5, 6. Disc. I.

3dly. We find him in a Case of desperate *Insolency*. For when the Marriners found out that he was to blame (for he could not avoid telling them) they incline to compassionate him, and rowed hard to bring the Ship to Land, but he bid them *throw him into the Sea*, ver. 12, 13. For we have no Reason to think that this came from the greatness of his Faith; for we do not read any word of his Application to God, or of his Prayer, till he came into the Whale's Belly.

Take notice here by the way, that *Jonah* is not wrought upon by Storms and Tempests; but he is affected with the sence of God's Preservation. 'Tis Ingenuity, Goodness and Kindness that works upon Men; that effects their Repentance, and brings them home to God. And this is his course generally. *Despise thou the Riches of his Goodness, not knowing that the Goodness of God leadeth thee to Repentance*, Rom. 2. 4.

But for all this, we find *Jonah* in a bad temper,

Vol. I. temper, *Jonah* 4. 9. where God asks him, *If he did well to be angry*, and he said, *I do well to be angry, even unto Death*. Here you see he was Refractory, Peevish, and in a disingenuous Temper. But

4. We find him in a state that is *Unnatural, Barbarous and Inhumane*. For he desired the Destruction of Sixscore thousand Persons, Body and Soul, to secure his Credit, and Reputation of being a true Prophet; as you may see by God's reasoning with him, *Jonah* 4. 11.

5. All these his Distempers are *aggravated* by his late *Deliverance* in the Belly of a Whale.

6. He is not overcome by the Declaration of the *reason of things*; no not out of the Mouth of God himself. For God reasons with him by a Gourd, which he had caused to come up, as a shelter for him; but he caused a Worm to smite it; so that it withered. But *Jonah* had pity on the Gourd, and he was angry for what had happened to it. And God made advantage of this, and improved it, for his Information. *Hadst thou Compassion on the Gourd for which thou didst not labour, but it rose up of it self in a Night, on a sudden, and a thing*



a thing of no long continuance; and Disc. I.  
*should not I have compassion of such a Mul-*  
*titude of People, Jonah 4. 10, 14.* ~~~~~

7. *And Lastly,* The Story leaves him without any account of *returning to himself*, and to a due Temper. Upon which I shall observe this; That *in high Iniquities, and great Enormities, we should not be too forward to pass a Sentence of Absolution, upon high and great Offenders.* Not that I will deny them the *Benefit* of Repentance, but I would not have them have the *Credit* of it in this state; for it may prove but hurtful to the Community, and contrary to the example of Scripture. For so we find concerning *Solomon*, notwithstanding so great things are spoken of him before his Idolatry; yet afterwards there is no mention of him: So that we are left without any declaration of his state God-ward. And *David* after his great Sin, there is never absolute Testimony given of his Integrity, but with reservation. It is to the hurt of Mankind that great and enormous Offenders should have the Sentence of Absolution passed upon them. I do not deprive any of the benefit of Repentance for the safety of their Soul; but let us not talk so much of it, as to give

Vol. I. give them the credit of it ; for this  
 ~~~~~ would be to credit their State, which  
 we should not do ; neither do we follow the Example of Scripture therein.

Now to make some *Observations* upon what we have been speaking.

1. Let us learn from what we have heard of *Jonah*, to consider, in how sad and forlorn a Condition we are, if God be not with us. Let every Man use *Jonah*, as a Glass for him to see his own foulness in: And let us examine and see what hath been past, and if in some time of our Life, we have not been in such a Distemper as *Jonah* here was.

2. Observe how *Sin multiplies*, and grows upon us, if once we fall into a Distemper. Here is Disobedience, and Peevishness, and Wrathfulness, and Displeasure against God ; and Barbarous Cruelty, and Inhumanity, and casting off the Bowels of Compassion.

3. Take notice from hence, of the great *danger of Selfishness*, and stiffly adhering to a Man's own sense. If once we relax our selves from the Rules and Laws of Action, and then humour our selves, see how we may be Misguided.

4. Let

4. Let this be for *Caution* and *Admonition*; which is a very unhappy Observation, That Persons acquainted with Religion, if once out of the way of Reason and Conscience, they prove rather more Exorbitant than others; as we have sad Instances of it in Scripture. When *David* had once broken loose, we then find him Idle, and from Idleness, to Wantonness; from Wantonness, to Adultery; and from Adultery, to Murder: We also find him, 2 *Sam.* 12. 31. practising Cruelty beyond the bounds of Reason, contrary to the Doctrine of Religion and Humane Nature. For had it not been enough to have subdued the *Ammonites*, but must he cause them to pass under *Saws and Harrows of Iron, and to go through the Brick-kiln*; things which were never commanded him to do. And a Man should never prosecute Revenge to the utmost. Thus we find *David* to do, after he had contracted the Guilt of those former Sins. And 2 *Sam.* 19. 29. we find him most rash in his Judgment; for a false Accusation of *Mephibosheth*, he gives his Land to his Servant; and upon complaint made unto him, he saith, *Trouble me no more in this matter, I have said, Thou and Ziba divide*

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Vol. I. *divide the Land.* Even so, when *Peter* had once broken loose and deny'd his Master, he soon after adds Imprecations and Cursings. I do not now instance in these Failings of good Men, but for our Advantage; for the Apostle hath told us, That all things that stand upon Record in Scripture, are for our *Admonition upon whom the ends of the World are come,* 1 Cor. 10. 11. Hence we are taught what great care a Man ought to take to preserve his Innocence and Integrity; for these are a Safeguard and Protection to him; these give him Security, and preserve him in Safety. A Man doth despise Sin at the first, but when he is out of the use of his Principles, which are wont to stay and govern him; he is as a weak Man without a Staff. Principles of Religion and Conscience, they are a bar against Iniquity; whereby it receives a Check, a Stop, and Control. But if a Man discharge himself once of the Reason of his mind, or the Rule of Conscience, we do not know how far he may Miscarry. If once the Principles of Religion and Conscience give way; and we voluntarily or negligently incur a Forfeiture of our Innocency and Integrity, and by so doing loose God's Protection.

tection, we shall be exposed to all manner of Evils ; for these are as a Dam, which once being broken down, all Evils will flow in upon us. *For beginnings of Sin are like the letting in of mighty Waters,* which at the first might have been prevented ; but if once it hath got over, twenty times as much will not stay it. So it is in Sin ; while a man retains his Innocence, there is a Modesty and Ingenuity upon his Mind, and that will be his Preservation ; but if once a Man either by gross neglect, or voluntarily doth consent to Iniquity, and so betray himself, he doth incur a Forfeiture of God's Protection, and cast away that which is his greatest Security and Defence. And this is the true account of that great Impudence and Immodesty that many Sinners arrive unto. For our better Security let us consider.

1. That it is much easier to Prevent, than to Restrain Sin, and to recover a Man's self. 'Tis easier a great deal not to consent to Sin, than to lay any limits upon ones self.

2. Let us be very *wary* and *cautious* of approaching Evil ; while we are upon our Legs, and are our selves, let us be Jealous and Cautious of approaching Evil.

C

3. Let

Vol. I. 3. Let us have no *Self-confidence* ; let us not Arrogate to our selves, as if we were Self-sufficient ; but know that our *Sufficiency is of God*, whose strength is sufficient for us in our Weakness. And these are the Advantages that I make of *Jonah's Distemper*.

Now to proceed. It is pity that that should be true, which *Jonah* would have, That a Sinner should in any state be incapable of Repentance, even after Denunciation of Judgment : or that Repentance should not at any time take effect : and this *Jonah* would have had. It were a thousand pities it should be so, for it would prove the undoing of the World, and the worst News that could be brought from Heaven unto Men ; That there should be any incapacity of Repentance in any state of Sin whatsoever ; or that Repentance in any case, at any time, should prove successless and ineffectual ; and yet, this is that which *Jonah* would have had. And he is a great deal the more to blame, because he is wilful in his Distemper : for in the Text we find, that *Jonah* knew before hand, that if they did Repent, God was so Gracious and Merciful, that he would revoke his Sentence, and therefore he tells him, that

that he was unwilling to go out of his Disc. I: Country. *For I knew that thou wast a Gracious and Merciful God, and Repentest thee of the Evil.*

1. Observe here, Friends, how Passion transforms a Man; how madly doth *Jonah* argue, even in the presence of God himself! But,

2. Observe how *Selfishness* doth narrow and contract a Man's Spirit. *Jonah* considers nothing; Sixscore thousand are nothing to be Sacrificed for the maintaining of his Credit: See then what a wretched thing 'tis to the World, a Selfish Spirit.

3. Observe hence, That Sin is the cause of Judgment. For God's Denunciation against the *Ninevites*, is caused by their Provocations.

4. Observe, That there is *no stay* at all in the way of Sin; for *Jonah* still goes on from worse to worse. He *that begins in Sin, knows not where he shall end.*

5. Take notice from hence, That Repentance doth alter the case: *I knew, that Thou wert a God gracious and merciful, and repentest Thee of the Evil.* 'Tis necessary to our Safety and Preservation to give up our selves to God's Guidance

Vol. I. and Government. Let us keep our selves
 ~~~~~ in God's hand and live in a daily belief  
 of our dependence upon God, and be  
 always sensible of our own Weakness  
 and Infirmitie ; and so to think of *Jonah's*  
 Miscarriage, as to make us modest  
 and humble, and to depend upon God  
 continually. He that will live according  
 to his own Will, or have his Will un-  
 subdued, and unresigned up to God, he  
 will not be safe. Lust unmortified doth  
 precipitate the humour, and useth a  
 Man as a Slave, and by it he is intoxica-  
 ted. Humour is an upstart and perfect  
 Rebel against the Sovereignty and Au-  
 thority of Reason.

6. Further, observe in this Story of  
*Jonah*, how God deals with Man to bring  
 him to a right Mind, when he finds him in  
 his Distemper. God here deals with  
*Jonah* by Reason, and by Argument.  
*Thou hadst pity upon the Gourd ; should not*  
*I have compassion upon Sixscore thousand*  
*Persons, amongst which there are many that*  
*through infirmity and nonage, are not able*  
*to know their right hand from their left ?*  
 God applies to our Faculties, and deals  
 with us by Reason and Argument : Let  
 us learn of God, and deal with one  
 another in Meekness and Calmness of  
 Spirit,

Spirit, and know, that *the reason of our* Disc. I.  
*Mind is the best tool we have to work*  
*withal* : and no Man's Sayings to another are valuable further then he brings Reason for what he says, and gives an account of himself in a rational way. We cannot do any good by Peevishness and Exasperation. *The Righteousness of God is not attained by the Wrath of Men* Jam. 1. 20. You see how God deals with *Jonah*, by Reason and by Argument.

Then further, it is said, ver. 2. *That Jonah prayed unto God, and said, Was not this my saying when I was yet in my Country, &c.* A strange kind of Prayer this was ; for indeed he rather Quarrels with God then Prays unto him. In Prayer let us take care of two things.

1. That our Mind be in a *Praying Temper*.

2. That we offer to God in Sacrifice *Prayer-matter*. Let us look to the temper of our Spirits, and the government of our Minds, and our due Intention. You see Truth for the matter, may be False for the manner. He brings this for an Argument, that *God was merciful* ; this was true for the matter : But a strange Argument for that which *Jonah*  
 C 3 would



Vol. I. would plead for by it. The Devil spoke truth in the Scripture sometimes, but always for ill purpose. That which *Jonah* would have had, would have undone him, and all the World besides. Sometimes we wish and pray for our harm. Let us submit our Prayer to God; 'tis sometimes better that God should not answer us in what we pray for.

You see upon reading these Words, a Man would not imagine the case as we find it. For here we have a Person of Eminent Priviledge; *Jonah*, who lived before other of the Prophets (the certain time not certainly known) of all the Prophets a *Type of Christ*. The Prophet *Isaiah* is called the Evangelical Prophet, for that he spake concerning the Kingdom of Christ very clearly: But *Jonah* had the advantage of being the Type of Christ. An Extraordinary Person, a Prophet, a Type of Christ; yet a Man exceedingly displeased, and very angry, and that without any cause at all. For if you consider these two things, you aggravate *Jonah's* Distemper beyond measure.

1. The Person with whom he is displeased.

2. The

2. The *cause* for which he is displeased. Disc. I.

1. The *Person with whom* he is displeased; and that is with God himself. He in whom all Souls delight; He in the enjoyment of whom we have Hearts-ease and Satisfaction, and whom to enjoy is Happiness and Eternal Life: The Light of whose Countenance is better than Life it self. Now *Jonah* is offended with God himself.

2. The *cause* of his Offence. He is offended with God's Goodness, he is offended with Sinners Repentance; he is offended that Repentance doth take effect. Was ever a Man offended in this manner? Behold here the infirmity of Humane Nature! Let no Man be Self-confident or Presumptuous: Let every Man's Mind be cloathed with Modesty, and dwell in Humility. Let us all fear our selves, and live in the sense of our dependance upon God. What prodigious Creatures we are, if we fall into Distemper? How monstrously may we misunderstand our selves? And this is not only manifest from the case of *Jonah*; but is universally acknowledged. St. *James* speaks of *Elias*, that extraordinary Person, *Jam. 5. 17.* That he was a Man

Vol. I. *subject to like Passions with other Men.*

~ And so *Acts* 14. 15. *Paul and Barnabas*, when in the exercise of their Commission, so behaved themselves, that the People were ready to Deify them: But they acknowledged themselves to be Men, of *like Passions* with them.

Since then all is not true Reason that takes place in the Lives of the very best of us, it is to be wished, that we would be no where Peremptory, no where Self-pleasers, that we would not be Dogmatical and Self-assuming; that we would not Judge and Censure one another; that all our Passions would display themselves in Tenderneſs and Compaſſion. In ſo doing we ſhould repreſent God himſelf. *Pſal.* 103. 8. *The Lord is merciful and gracious, ſlow to anger, &c.* *Iſa.* 49. 15. *As a Father pitieth his Children, ſo the Lord pitieth them that fear him.*

See then that you keep out of Paſſion, if you would not ſhamefully miſcarry. And if you be in a Paſſion, never believe your ſelves; or be confident of any thing you did, if not in calme Reason. If in Paſſion, review and examine; and when calme conſider and rectifie that which you did amiſs: You ſee you have  
Reason



Reason from the miscarriage of *Jonah*. Disc. I.  
 'Tis strange that a Man should be angry and displeased with God ; yet thus far did his Passion draw him. Let us from hence know how frail and subject to Infirmary we are. That ever it should come into the head of a Man to be aggrieved that there is a place for Repentance ! and that God should pardon upon Repentance ! and that God should give over to punish when Men repent ! One would think, we should be Merciful for our own sakes. Was not *David* rash in Judgment when *Nathan* represented in a Parable what he himself had done ? He passed a Sentence that he would not have had executed. That we may not forsake our own Mercies, and pass Judgment upon our selves : Let us be very cautious and deliberate, and easie to make candid Constructions of other Mens Actions. Then how unreasonable is it to be aggrieved at God's Goodness, at Sinners Repentance ? *If a Man be once out of the use of Reason, there is no bounds to Unreasonableness ; once out of the way of Reason, who knows what will be, or how far a Man will go ? How desperate a thing it is in Jonah, that he would have this stand upon Record in Holy Scripture,*

Vol. I. Scripture, *That God did refuse to give Sinners Repentance, and when they had repented he did refuse to accept them*; and yet this *Jonah* would have had upon Record; clean contrary to the dealings of God. For we find, when *Ahab* (who was a Person that had sold himself to do Wickedness) did but repent and humble himself, God promiseth that *the Evil should not come in his days*. But by *Jonah's* consent, God should not give way to Repentance.

But you will ask, Wherefore do I blemish the Reputation of a Prophet, of a Type of Christ?

I answer, Whatsoever is upon Record in the Scripture is for our Admonition; we look upon him now, how he acts in his Distemper, not to cry him down, but by his loss to give our selves advantage.

1st. then, Let us in this Instance see our own Weakness and Infirmary, and be modest and humble. Let us not brag of our own Reason and Wisdom. Let us all know, *That we are safe only in God's hands*; and that if we incur a Forfeiture of God's Protection, we may extremely miscarry; as we may see in this Instance of *Jonah*.

2. Let

2. Let us *preserve our Innocence*, and Disc. I.  
fear to fall in Passion, beware of run-  
ning into such heat and distemper of  
Mind.

3. Take care of *Selfishness* and Nar-  
rowness of Spirit: the narrowness of  
*Jonah's* Mind, who so much valued his  
Credit of being a true Prophet; that the  
safety of so many Thousands seem'd no-  
thing in his Eye; though herein he  
contradicted the very Nature of God,  
and his own knowledge. For, saith he,  
*I knew that thou wert gracious*, &c. And  
also it was contrary to the express Decla-  
rations that God had made; That though  
he should denounce against Sinners, and  
commissionate a Prophet to declare the  
particular Judgment; yet he is not  
bound to bring the Judgment upon that  
Place or Persons, against whom he had  
denounced them, if the case of Repen-  
tance doth intervene.



Let us suppose our Inward and Outward  
feel to fall in Particular, between  
ning into such heat and different of  
Mind.

Take care of what I say and I will  
show you of Spirit: the nature of  
Jews Mind, who so much valued his  
Credit of being a true Prophet, and the  
fury of so many thousands of  
men in his day, though he in his  
concluded the very Name of God,  
and his own knowledge. For, said he,  
I have seen many wonders, &c. And  
also it was contrary to the express Decla-  
ration that God had made: That though  
he should denounce against sinners and  
commission a Prophet to declare the  
particular Judgment: yet he is not  
bound to bring the Judgment upon that  
Place or Person, seeing sinners had  
denounced them, in the case of their  
sins both together.

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## DISCOURSE II.

The Perfection of the Mercy of God.

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JOEL ii. 13.

*For he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the Evil.*

**A**lthough I have changed my Text, Disc. II. I have not left my Argument; and I have done it for this end: In *Jonah* we find the self same Words, but to a very unnatural use. By these Words *Jonah* would justifie himself. I therefore purposely left that Prophet, because I would not further enquire into his Distemper. Though it is of great use, that *Jonah* reports thus of God, who would not have it so. The Advantages that I have made are these.

*First*, That by taking notice of the miscarriage of so eminent a Person, that he should so fail and miscarry; we may thereby

Vol. I. thereby see the frailty of Humane Nature. And this should teach us to be modest and humble, and to live in a daily sense of our dependence upon God. *Moses*, the meekest Man upon Earth, stands upon Record that he spake unadvisedly with his Lips.

Secondly, *Jonah's* Distemper represents to you the danger of Passion; how *Jonah* misbehaves himself to God, how injurious and uncharitable to Man, when in a Passion! It is not safe for any Man to believe himself, or to trust himself, if in a heat. Beware therefore of running into heat and distemper of Mind.

The *Third* Advantage that I make is, to recommend the Spirit of the Gospel; it is always to be found in a Spirit of Love. Our Saviour, living and dying, was always in a Spirit of Love; and the first Martyr *St. Stephen*, he exactly writes after his Copy, *Acts* 7. 60. *And he cryed with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this Sin to their charge.* Wherein he doth much exceed the Testimony in the Old Testament, by *Zachariah*, who saith, *The Lord require it at their hands.* I cannot say, but *Zachariah's* Prayer was just; but *St. Stephen's* was gracious. These things are upon Record for our instruction; therefore



therefore we are to take notice of them, Disc. II.  
to make us wary, lest we our selves be  
overtaken ; and to make us tender-spi-  
rited, out of the sense of our own Fal-  
libility.

This for a reason why I take notice  
of *Jonah's* misbehaviour.

I now follow this Prophet, *For he is  
gracious and merciful, &c.*

When God passed by *Moses*, he made  
this Declaration of himself, *Exod. 34. 6.*  
*The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and  
gracious, long suffering, abundant in good-  
ness and truth, &c.* And in *Psal. 86. 5.*  
*Thou Lord art good, and ready to forgive.*  
And in *Psal. 112. 4* *He is gracious and  
full of Compassion.* In these places of  
Scripture you have, either all these  
Words, or as much said of God. And  
indeed nothing is more true of God, then  
that he is the *first and chiefest good* ; his  
prime Perfection is Goodness, and our  
truest Notion of him is, that he is *Al-  
mighty Goodness.*

For what I have further to say, I  
shall observe this Method.

I. I shall speak in point of *Vindicati-  
on*, and give satisfaction to Objections  
that arise against this great Truth.

II. I

# The Perfection of the

Vol. I.

II. I shall make *Explication* of the several Phrases in the Text.

III. Proceed to *Confirmation* of it by satisfactory Argument.

IV. To matter of *Caution*.

V. And lastly make some *Application*.

I. For *Vindication*. There are *Three Objections* to be removed, and then the Heart of Man cannot object any thing against this Representation of the Divine Goodness.

*First*, The several *Instances* of *Severity* represented to us in Scripture, and in other Stories.

*Secondly*, Some Scriptures represent God very *Terrible*.

*Thirdly*, The necessity of *Justice*. For as some imagine, it is indispensable, and of absolute necessity that Sin be Punished.

*First*, For the several *Instances* of God's *Severity* in the Scripture, which seem contrary to this Goodness and great Kindness of God to Man. We have the Instance of the Deluge, wherein all Mankind (except some few) were swept away with the Flood. The Instance of the Seven Nations which God commanded to be destroyed. The *Israelites* when brought out of *Egypt*, led up and down the

Gen. 6.

Deut. 7.

23, 24.

Numb. 14.

22.

Deut. 1. 35.

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the Wilderness, and at last consumed. *Dis. II.*  
*Nadab* and *Abihu*, for their inadverten-  
 cy, in offering strange Fire, were con-  
 sumed by Fire. *Uzzah*, in his good  
 will, meddling with the Ark without  
 God's express command, smitten dead.  
 Five hundred of the *Bethshemites*, that  
 rejoyced at the return of the Ark from  
 the *Philistines*, slain suddenly for look-  
 ing into it. The Instance of the Deso-  
 lation of the *Jewish Nation*. *Ananias*  
 and *Saphirah* who were great Benefactors  
 to the Church, reserving part of what  
 they sold to the use of the Church, were  
 punished with sudden Death. *Herod*  
 who took the applause of the People  
 to himself, dyed a most dreadful Death.  
 And the dreadful Destruction of *Sodom*  
 and *Gomorah*. To which I answer in  
 several Propositions.

1. It is enough to be gracious, not to  
 be wanting in Necessaries, for any ones  
 good: And he that doth so, may abound  
 in his Courtesies as he himself pleaseth.  
 When Necessaries for our Good are af-  
 forded, and by any neglected, the blame  
 lyes upon them.

2. Sometimes the Sins of Nations and  
 of Persons are come to their height, and  
 God forced to punish.

D

3. The

Lev. 10:

1, 2.

1 Chron.

13. 9, 10.

1 Sam. 6:

19.

Matt. 24:

Josephus

de bello

Judaico.

Acts 5. 1,

&c.

Act. 12, 23.

Gen. 19:

24.

Nunquam

deficit in

necessariis,

sed a un-

dat in gra-

tuitis pro

arbitrio suo.

Jer. 51. 13.



Vol. I.

Luke 13. 3,  
5. and 1.

Cor. 10. 6,

11.

Hicure, hic

seca Domi-

ne, modo

parcas in

eternum.

3. The Judgments of God in this Life are *exemplary* and *disciplinary*; and better a mischief should fall on particular Persons, than that a general inconvenience should follow.

4. God sometimes lets us feel something of Hell here, to prevent it hereafter. Chastisements are exercises of Vertue, not effects of Vengeance, *Heb.* 12. 10, 11.

5. There may be a Particular account given in several Cases.

I will single out the hardest. As to *Nadab* and *Abihu*, *Uzzah*, and the *Bethshemites*, *Annaniah* and *Saphirah*; to these, particular Reasons may be given.

When *Nadab* and *Abihu* sinned, the *Mosaical* Institution was but newly set up. And when *Annaniah* and *Saphira* sinned, the Gospel Institution was New. Now when a new Law is set up, there is severe inflicting of Punishment in case of Transgression. For if Authority should suffer it to go unpunished, it would be understood and thought an allowance of it; and therefore did God so severely punish these *first Transgressions* of his new Institutions. Then; as for *Uzzah* and the *Bethshemites*, we must consider, that God had severely plagued the

the *Philistines* (when the Ark was in their Hands) with Emerods in their secret parts; and they not acquainted with the Religion of the Ark; therefore surely he would not pass by and overlook *Uzzah* and the *Bethshemites* who did know it. It cannot be imagined, that God would allow a Rashness and Absurdity in *them*, having so severely punished the *Philistines* before.

6. Though we do not know what time or leisure God will allow to Sinners to Repent, yet we certainly know God will grant Forgiveness to Penitents; which is enough to declare God Gracious and Merciful.

7. If it be not the case of Repentance, there is no other way for God's forgiveness; for this is the Tenor of the Grace of God, *Acts* 11. 18. *Repentance unto Life.* *Acts* 5. 31. *Him hath God exalted with his right Hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give Repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of Sins.* *Luke* 24. 47. *And that Repentance and Remission of Sins should be preached in his Name.* I cannot expect the subsequent act of Forgiveness, where there is not the antecedent act of Repentance, and Conversion, and Reformation. For what we

Vol. I have done amiss, and do not recal by Repentance, we are thought to stand to.

8. We cannot competently judge concerning the Proceedings of God to his Creatures, when taken in Iniquity ; because we are not privy to the Spirit in which Men Sin. This for Answer to the *first Objection*.

The *Second Objection* is relating to such Scriptures as represent God *severe*, by giving up to a Reprobate sense, Stupidity and hardness of heart, &c. Psal. 69. 23. *Let their Eyes be darkned, that they may not see, and bow down their back always.* And Rom. 11. 10. To give an account of these places in short, see but against what Persons these are spoken ; Persons that were contumacious, and resolved to go on in an evil way. And where there is this case of wilful sinning pursued with Impenitency and Contumacy ; in this Case I must say two things.

1. This Case hath no Promise. And
2. It is not fit for the exercise of Grace and Mercy.

1. It hath no Promise of God. For the Grace of the Gospel runs in this  
 ACT. 11. 48. *strain ; Repentance unto Life, Repentance*  
*and*



and Remission of Sins : Never Remission Dis. II.  
promised without Repentance ; and this  
is the Tenour of the Grace of the Gos- <sup>Luke 24.</sup>  
pel.

2. This Case is not fit for the exercise of Grace and Mercy ; for this Case is not Compassionable : For this Sinner would not have God to disturb him ; he would be let alone ; he makes no Application to God at all ; he doth not desire to be beholden to him. Now God cannot be said to be wanting, though in this case he leaves Men to their own Hearts Lusts, because it is to them according to their own Hearts desire. For these Sinners desire not the knowledge of God's ways ; they choose the Pleasures of Sin, whatever follows upon it.

But if any shall say, or think, God may if he please, by an irresistible Power prevent all Sin and Misery : I answer, Is it reasonable, that God having made intelligent and voluntary Agents, should force them, and make them do either this or that ; so or so ; whether they will or no ? See what will follow.

1<sup>st</sup>. There would be no exercise of Vertue, for all Vertue is in choice. 2<sup>dly</sup>. No Happiness, for we should be under

Vol. I. force and constraint. 3dly. Of what use would our Natural Faculties then be? 4thly. It would alter the very State of God's Creation. It could be no Probation State; and it is the contrivance of Wisdom, first that we should work, and then have a Reward. 5thly. God hath made us of Natures to be otherwise dealt withal. God draws with the Cords of a Man, viz. Perswasion and Instruction; and if God draws, it is expected we should follow him. God works with us, and it follows that we should work out the Affairs of our Salvation with Care and Diligence. This gives you an account of some Scriptures, whereat some may stumble. As that of God's hardning *Pharaoh's Heart*; *Pharaoh* goes on wilfully and impenitently to sin against God, and resolves to be stubborn; and God withdraws upon Provocations; and with-holds his Grace, and lets him alone; and this is call'd the hardning of *Pharaoh's Heart*. When Men affect to be Arbitrary and Lawless, God leaves them to their own Hearts-Lusts, and gives them over to vile Affections. And this is the case accounted for in *Isa. 6. 9, 10. Go and tell this People, hear ye indeed but understand not, and see ye indeed* but

*Voluntas  
sequitur di-  
stamen In-  
tellectus.  
Meliores  
ducit amor.  
Tetrag-  
matis gra-  
vis an.*

*i d' exsa-  
tion, not  
anastion.  
St. Chrysost.  
Consequen-  
tional, not  
Intentional.*

*but perceive not. Make the Heart of this People fat, and their Ears heavy, and shut their Eyes, least they see with their Eyes, and hear with their Ears, and understand with their Hearts, and convert and be healed.* And this is referred to six times in the New Testament, viz *Matt. 13. 14. and Mar. 4. 12. and Luk. 8. 10. and Job. 12. 40. and Acts 28. 26. and Rom. 11. 8.* Not that this is spoken Prophetically, but spoken by the Prophet first, and by the Evangelists and the Apostle afterward, referring to the Prophet in the like cases. For this is only what is consequent upon Men's disobediences; nothing was antecedently intended by God. But to justify God in this case, two things I lay down. *1<sup>st</sup>.* None are wicked through any neglect of God; but by their own wilfulness. *2<sup>dly</sup>.* None are Miserable by God's contrivance, but by their own Wickedness. So that God is free from the Blood of all Men, Our Destruction is of our selves; but our Salvation is of God. So that those Scriptures that represent God terrible, are in the case of Man's consenting to wilful Sin, and continuing Impenitent. God in this case, upon Provocation, gives Men up to their own Hearts Lusts.



Vol. I. For the *Third Objection*. The necessity of Justice in case of Sin. This will be resolved by a true explication of Justice. *Justitia est suum cuiq; tribuere :* *God's Justice is the same with his Integrity and Uprightness.* Now these consist with the Reason of the thing, and the right of the Case : These are the Perfections of his Nature ; from which no Action of God varies. But without prejudice to these, Scripture attributes to God Kindness and Severity ; and these are limited and determined by his Will ; in respect whereof 'tis said, *He will have Mercy on whom he will have Mercy : and he doth execute Loving-kindness and Judgment and Righteousness in the Earth.* Loving-kindness that is of Grace, the other two are of Justice. But in regard of the Loving-kindness of God, *he is Master of his own Right ;* and he doth as he pleaseth ; for his Grace is free, and his Will is the Law to him ; and it is apparent that he hath done differently ; as in the Case of Men and Angels. John 3. 16. *God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting Life.* And then for the Angels, it is said, 2 Pet. 2. 4. *God spared not the Angels that sinned, but cast them down*

*Justitia est  
suum cuiq;  
tribuere :  
ergo Pecca-  
tori penam.*

Rom. 11.  
22.

Exod. 33.

19.

Rom. 9. 15.

Jer. 9. 24.

*Jus pena-  
rum Credi-  
toris est.*

to Hell, and delivered them into Chains of Darkneſs, to be reſerved unto Judgment. In the one Caſe is his Loving-kindneſs, and in the other his Severity. He exerciſeth Judgment according to the Law of his Nature : He exerciſeth Loving-kindneſs according to the Law of his Will. Now to bring this home to the Caſe. I ſay, if God puniſh Sin where Sin is committed, it is juſt ; God may juſtly do it, for Sin deſerves Punishment. But we cannot ſay it is neceſſary that God ſhould puniſh Sin ; for if you ſay that, you take away God's Liberty, you deſtroy all Acts of Grace, you leave no room for Repentance. *Juſt if it be done, but not juſt to be done ;* for then it cannot be undone, but God muſt be unjuſt ; and then God cannot pardon. If we affirm the latter, we may make a Law for God. God may if he pleaſe remit and abate of his own Right ; for every one that is an Owner may diſpoſe of his own if he will. They who receive not theſe things, I dare ſay, they are wanting to a ſolid Foundation of their own Faith. *It is Juſtice in God to do Men good, and it is Goodneſs in God to puniſh Sin if unrepented,* ſaith Origen.

Dis. II.  
*juſtum dicitur quod jure fieri poteſt : & quod jure fieri debet.*

*juſtum ſi fiat. juſtum ut fiat.*

*Quiſq; poteſt cedere de jure ſuo.*

*Deus Juſticia beneficia cit, & bonitate punit*  
Origen.

II. The next thing in the Method of the

Vol. I. the Discourse is *Explication* of the several *Phrases* in the Text. In the Text you have *five* several Words ; not that they denote several Perfections in God, but express Divine Goodness suitable to our Case and Condition ; the same in God, but distinguished by the quality of the Case.

1<sup>st</sup>. He is *Gracious*] which imports three things. 1<sup>st</sup>. So as to do good freely, without constraint. 2<sup>dly</sup>. Because he doth good, above the measure of right and just. 3<sup>dly</sup>. Because he doth good, without antecedent Desert, or After-recompence.

2<sup>dly</sup>. He is *Merciful*] Take that also in three Particulars. 1<sup>st</sup>. So as to compassionate his Creatures in Misery. 2<sup>dly</sup>. So as to help them, in respect of their Infirmities. 3<sup>dly</sup>. So as to pardon their Iniquities.

3<sup>dly</sup>. He is *slow to Anger*] And that also in three Particulars. 1<sup>st</sup>. So as not to take advantage against his Creatures. 2<sup>dly</sup>. So as to overlook Provocation. 3<sup>dly</sup>. So as to allow space for Repentance.

4<sup>thly</sup>. He is of *great Kindness*] Take that also in three Particulars. 1<sup>st</sup>. What he doth, he doth in pure good will, and for our good. 2<sup>dly</sup>. Not in expectation of



of being benefited by us. 3dly. It is infinite, not according to the Proportion or Disposition of the Receiver. Dis. II.

5thly. He *repenteth him of the Evil*] Take that in four Particulars. 1st. So as either it comes not at all: Or, 2dly. It proves not what we fear and imagine. Or, 3dly. It stays but a while if it do come. Or, 4thly. He turns it into Good. I give you but *hints*, and leave the rest to your Meditation.

III. The third thing in the Method of Discourse is *Confirmation* of the Truth of the Proposition in the Text. There are four Names and Titles given to God that make this out.

1st. His *Creation* in Infinite Goodness, Wisdom and Power. This speaks God to be full of Goodness; for Communication speaks Goodness in the Principle. The variety, order, and fitness of things to their Ends, declare the Wisdom of God. And to bring things together so remotely distant, *non ens* to *ens*, declares his Power.

2dly. *Conservation, Protection, and Government*, declare God to be Good, and full of Loving-kindness; in which respect God works and we work; for we are all *workers together with God*.

3dly. *Restau-*

Vol. I. 3dly. *Restauration and Recovery* out of the state of Sin and Misery, speaks God's Goodness. When we were undone, when we had marred and spoiled our selves, God finds out a way for our recovery.

4thly. *Future Confirmation* and settlement in Glory and Happiness, the Miracle of God's Goodness, Wisdom and Power. These four things abundantly declare God Good and Gracious.

IV. The fourth thing in the Method of the Discourse, is matter of *Caution*, in two Particulars.

1st. Not to *abuse* this Declaration of Divine Goodness, either by holding Truth in Unrighteousness, or turning the Grace of God into Wantonness. *Having therefore these Promises (dearly Beloved) let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit, 2 Cor. 7. 1.* Should we abuse his Goodness, it were to produce an effect contrary to the Principle.

2dly. Let there be no *hasty* or *rash Judgment*. If any thing seem harsh in the Dispensation of Providence, we may understand it in a little time; therefore he that believes should not make haste. We are in the Hands of a good God;

God ; whatsoever the Appearance is, Dis. II.  
undoubtedly this Representation of God   
is true, *viz. That he is gracious and mer-*  
*ciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness,*  
*and repenteth him of the Evil.* And al-  
though we cannot understand presently,  
in the Particulars, what God doth; yet  
it is undoubtedly true, that it is a mild  
and gentle Spirit, and loving to Mankind,  
that governs the World.

V. The fifth thing in the Method of  
this Discourse is *Application*.

*1<sup>st</sup>*. Here is matter of *Information*.  
Then have we a true Judgment of God,  
when we think of his Greatness in con-  
junction with his Goodness. Never di-  
vide his Almightyness from his Good-  
ness. It is very true, *No true Majesty*  
*without Goodness* : yea I dare say it, it is  
the greatest Act of Power to Commise-  
rate and Pardon ; for other Acts of  
Power subdue things without; but he that  
doth Commiserate and Pardon, subdues  
himself, which is the greatest Victory.  
General good Will, and Universal Love, *An Deus*  
and Charity, are the greatest, both Per- *fortis per-*  
fections and Acts of Power. To be rea- *vertat fu-*  
*slitiam?*  
dy to forgive, and to be easie to be  
reconciled, are things that are grafted,  
not in the Wilderness of the World, but  
in



Vol. I. in the most noble and generous Natures. They are under the fullest Communication of God that give themselves up to Acts of Clemency and Compassion, and are forward to relieve, and to do good, to pardon and to forgive. These are the Persons that are endued with Divine Power. If Goodness and Righteousness were not in an unseparable Conjunction with Almighty Power, the whole Creation were in danger and hazard; and could not be safe, nor have any security.

*Quo Major  
eo placabi-  
lior. Emp.  
Motto.*

2dly. Here is matter of *Imitation*. Let us imitate and resemble God. Afford thy Fellow-Creature that Measure that God doth thee; the contrary is an Argument of thy not partaking of the Divine Nature. *He that hateth his Brother abides in Death.* And how say'st thou, That *thou lovest God whom thou hast not seen, and lovest not thy Brother whom thou seest?* They who are indeed acquainted with God, and naturalized to him, they live in a Spirit of hearty Love and universal good Will, 1 John 4. 16. *God is Love, and he that dwells in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.* The first thing in Religion is to have right Notions and Apprehensions of God, what

is

## Mercy of God.

47

is true concerning God. *For we shall never be right in our selves, if we have wrong Thoughts of God.* Therefore this is first in Religion to know what is true in God, and the next is to partake thereof; *i. e.* for us, in our measure and degree, to be what God is in fulness, height and excellency, wherein God is Imitable and Communicable.

*Θεομιμνη-  
σις. Ep. 5.  
1. and 1  
Pet. 1. 4.*

3dly. Here is matter of *Consolation* to all that are willing to do well, and would be good. They are in the Hands of a good God; so that they may be encouraged, and their Hands strengthened in their duty. They have an Account to give to an equal Lord; they serve a loving Master. Who would not be engaged to such an one, *who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the Evil?* This is our great Encouragement, that faithfully serve God, that if there be a hearty good will on our part, and an honest endeavour to please God; so ample and abundant is the Grace of God, that it will supply all that is defective, either affording more Strength, or by candid Construction, or free Pardon of all our mistakes. If not by giving more strength, yet by candid Con-

*Qui instat  
precepto,  
præcurrit  
auxilio.*

Vol. I. Construction of what is weakly done but well meant ; or by free Pardon. *God is far better than we can conceive of him.* For 1<sup>st</sup>. he is infinite in all his Perfections; and we are but finite in all our Apprehensions, and Conceptions of him. And 2<sup>dly</sup>. we are able through Grace to avoid evil and do good. And 3<sup>dly</sup>. Our Imperfections are easily pardoned ; for *God pitieth us, as a Father pitieth his Children. He knoweth our frame, and considereth we are but dust.* Now this should quicken and enliven us cheerfully to obey God, and heartily to love him. I dare say, he doth not know God at all, as he is ; nor is he in a good state of Religion ; who doth not find in himself, at times, Ravishings with the sweet and lovely Considerations of the Divine Perfections, viz. his Benignity expressed to all his Creatures, and his Benefits conferred upon Mankind. He that hath not a sense and consideration of these, and on whose Mind these have made no impression, he is devoid of all true knowledge of God, and I dare say, he is not in a state of true Religion.

But what I now speak of, is not to Impenitent and Contumacious Sinners ; none of this reacheth them. To them  
there

Psal. 103.  
14.



there is no Promise, as I told you before ; their case is not Compassionable. If we use our Principles of Reason, we cannot put it upon God, to act contrary to the Quality and Perfection of his Nature. The very Goodness of God doth oblige him to punish Impenitent and Contumacious Sinners ; and to controul and discourage Sin ; for if Goodness be the Perfection of the Divine Nature, then it is suitable to him, to promote Goodness in his Creation.

Thus have I run over these things only summarily, wherein I have done you this courtesy, I have given you matter for your Meditation.

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## DISCOURSE III.

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*The Difference of Times with respect  
to Religion.*

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PSALM xcv. 7.

*To day if ye will hear his Voice,  
harden not your Hearts.*

**T**O give my self Advantage, and to Dis. III.  
command your Attention; In the  
first place I will take notice how this  
place of Scripture is referred to, and  
quoted in the New Testament.

If you look into *Heb. 3. 7.* you will  
find these Words brought in, *As saith  
the Holy Ghost, To day if ye will hear his  
Voice.* What therefore is said as con-  
sonant to them, you are to look upon,  
to receive, and entertain as the Word of  
God, and as dictated by the Holy Spi-  
rit. For the Words themselves, there  
is much matter in them, and they are



## The difference of Times

Vol. I. of great Weight and Importance. But  
 I will only declare to you in several Particulars, *That upon a Spiritual Account, there is great difference in Time.* For this is suggested, as that wherein the force of the Exhortation doth lye, *To day, &c.* And to make this out I will shew you,

I. That *sooner and later* are not alike, in respect of *Eternity*; and that the main Work we have to do in Time, is to prepare for Eternity.

II. I will shew, that *Times of Ignorance* and of *Knowledge* are not alike.

III. That *before and after voluntary commission of known Iniquity*, are not alike.

IV. That *before and after contracted naughty Habits*, are not alike.

V. That the time of *God's gracious and particular Visitation*, and the time when *God withdraws* his gracious Presence and Assistance, are not alike.

VI. The flourishing time of our *Health*, and *Strength*; and the hour of *Sickness*, *Weakness*, and approach of *Death*, are not alike.

VII. Now and Hereafter, Present and Future, *this World*, and *the World to come*, is not alike.

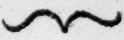
And

And by that time I have given you an account of these Particulars, and made it evident to you, That *all times are not alike*, for the purposes of Eternity, and the concernments of our Souls ; it will appear highly adviseable (considering the Advantages of Life, Health, and Strength, and the reference of Time to Eternity) for us all to lead such Lives, upon which we may safely dye ; and to employ our selves in such Actions as are accountable when we come to leave the World ; since our welfare to Eternity depends upon it. We are, I say, highly concerned, so to order our Conversations in the World ; so to govern our Spirits, and lead such lives, as when we shall come to leave the World, we may reflect with satisfaction upon what we have done, as good *Hezekiah* did, *1 Kings* 20. 3, 4. When the Message came to him that he should dye and not live, he turned his Face to the Wall, and said, *I beseech thee, O Lord, to remember now how I have walked before thee in Truth, and with a perfect Heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight.* If we do not consider this, we shall be wanting to the true Interest of our Immortal Souls. We often read in Scripture

E 3





Man can use his Reason as he ought, Dis.III.  
 but Religion will be predominant with him, and over-rule all his Motions.   
 Solomon saith, *Prov. 16. 3. That the hoary Head is a Crown of Glory*, But how? if it be found in the way of *Righteousness*; that is, if a Man hath used himself all his days, from the time he came to the use of Reason, to the time of old Age, in ways of Religion, his *gray hairs will be a Crown of Glory to him*. 'Tis of great advantage to begin well, for so saith *Solomon, Prov. 22. 6. Train up a Child in the way that he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it*. 'Tis true indeed that some do degenerate; for these *Proverbs* are not to be taken strictly, but only to signify what is most common and likely, and what is to be expected; and *this* is of that nature; and doth shew a Man to be the greater Sinner if he depart from a good way that he was early brought into. For we easily do what we have been bred unto, and used to do. It is true that serious Repentance, wheresoever it is, doth alter the Case; but then you must know, that late Repentance is seldom true; and this I am very sure of, that there is little or no proof of late Re-

E 4

pentance,

*Penitentia  
sera raro  
seria.*

penitance, because there is not opportunity to act. And they do mightily abuse themselves, that put off their Repentance with hopes of being like the *Penitent Thief*, who begun ill, but ended well. But pray consider, that this was an extraordinary Case, a miraculous Work of God's Grace; and such as we cannot expect the like again, till the Saviour of the World shall come again, and suffer. And the Apostle tells us, that there can be no more Sacrifice for Sin then that which hath been already offered. Others there are that do abuse that Passage in the 20th. of *Matt.* where we read, that *the Lord of the Vineyard went forth to hire Labourers into his Vineyard, and took some at the last hour of the day.* But here I will observe four things.

1. That they which were hired late, stood all that time in the Market-place in *expectation*.

2. They were no sooner hired, and appointed, but they went into the *Vineyard*.

3. They had *no Plea* at all for the Wages of a day. For it was said unto them, *I will give you what is Right.*  
Not

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Not the Wages of a day : that was left Dis.III.  
wholly to the Lord's good Pleasure, 

4. It was *beyond their Expectation*, or at least beyond the common ground of expectation. And we find their Fellow-labourers were not satisfied in it, that *they* should have the Recompence of a days Work, when they had not done the Work of a day. Therefore let us not be so much mistaken, as to think we may defer the work of Repentance, and making provision for Eternity, till the last. They which do so, little understand what Sanctification imports; what Reconciliation with the Nature, Mind, and Will of God, and the Law of Heaven, doth signifie. No less than this can we understand by it, to glorifie God by a holy and unblameable Conversation, and to do good, and serve God in our Generations. For *Heaven is more a State and Temper, than a Place*. That for the first : *sooner and later*, are not alike.

II. Times of *Ignorance* and of *Knowledge*, are not alike: For, the time of Ignorance, that is as *the Night, in which no Man can work*, John 4. 4. And the Apostle tells us, *Acts 17. 30. That these times*



Vol. I. *times of Ignorance God winked at.* And that if they had been blind, they should have had no Sin, John 9. 41. which you are not to understand absolutely, that those that are ignorant and stupid are not guilty; but that they are not so great Sinners as those which pretend to know. And therefore it is said, that *their Sin remaineth*, that is, it doth remain with all manner of Aggravation. For you cannot say more or worse of any Man, than that he doth Evil knowingly, and against his Conscience. It is universally acknowledged, that Ignorance doth greatly excuse, and therefore we have Charity for Idiots; and where Men have never heard, and are without the Pale of the Church, we leave them to God's Mercy, and exclude them not. But it is quite otherwise where Men are *a Law to themselves*, as the Apostle speaks, *Rom. 2. 14.*

*Infidelitas  
negativa  
neminem  
damnat.*

*Ἐν τῷ  
νόμῳ.*

There are three things in which every Man that is born into the World, and hath the use of Reason, is a Law unto himself; and if he do not observe that Law in those Particulars, he will be self-condemned, and neither himself nor any other Man can justify him.

1. As to the point of *Sobriety* and *Temperance*. That we do moderate our Appetites, and not abuse our selves, through excessive and inordinate use of the things of this Life.

2. A Man is a Law to himself as to *Justice* and *Righteousness*. And he will be self-condemned if he do not use fairness and equal dealing with other Men: Such as he would himself receive from others, he is obliged to give. If a Man fail in these Particulars, he goes against the Law that is connatural to him, and would be self-condemned though he had no other Revelation from God, and had never heard of the Bible.

3. A Man is a Law to himself in respect of that *Fear* and *Reverence* which he owes to God. For a Man knows nothing more certainly, than that he was not Original to his own Being, and that he did not make himself; but that he was brought into Being by some Agent, that was more Able, Wise, and Powerful than himself. For he that knows how unable he is to continue himself in Being, cannot but know that he did not bring himself into Being, but that he owes his Being to another; and that he ought to Fear, Reverence, and Adore him

Vol. I. him from whom he received it ; and if he do it not, he must condemn himself. Therefore I am sure there is no Man shall be condemned by God, that is not first condemned by himself, in some or other of these Particulars, that I have named. In some other, and *lesser matters*, there may be invincible Ignorance, and this may excuse in those Particulars ; but in the great Matters of Religion, and Conscience, there is no invincible Ignorance. If Men are at any loss as to these things I have named ; their Ignorance is affected, and 'tis through gross self-neglect, and practice contrary to knowledge. And in these Cases their Guilt is aggravated, and their Case is not compassionate. And that for the second. Times of *Ignorance*, and the times of *Knowledge* are not alike.

III. Before and after *voluntary commission of Sin*, is not alike upon a Spiritual Account. It is not imaginable the Loss that a Man sustains by consenting to Iniquity ; how much he spoils his Principle, mars his Spirit, and spoils his Parts. This you have acknowledged in the Counsel of *Achitophel*, which he gives to *Absalom*,



*Absalom*, which is called the *Good Coun- sel* of Achitophel, 2 *Sam.* 17. 14. Not that it was good in it self, for it was as wicked Counsel as ever was given : For he adviseth *Absalom* to do a vile Fact, to confirm himself in his Rebellion against his Father, and to remove the Boundaries of Good and Evil ; than which there is not a more desperate Undertaking. For a Man under pretence of Power to control the Rule of Right, the Measures of Heaven, is to divert things from their Natures, and to change their Natural Course ; which is as monstrous in Morals as in Naturals. The Mind uncorrupted is a tender thing, and suffers most by violence, and unnatural use. The Scripture speaks of hardness of Heart, as a most monstrous State, *Jer.* 13. 23. *Can the Ethiopian change his Skin, or the Leopard his Spots.* These things are naturally impossible. No more can one that hath abused himself, and made havock of Conscience, by accustoming himself to do Evil, learn to do Well, without the especial Grace and Favour of God. The coming in of Sin is like the coming in of Water : It may be stopp'd by a little Turf at the first ; but if it once find a way over, it breaks down all before

Vol. I. fore it. It is much easier to retain Innocence, than to recover a Man's self. If a Man will venture to do that which is not fit to be done, no body knows where he will end. The Practice of Iniquity makes Men shameless and impudent; the Devil is easily let in, but

ὁ ἐνδοῦ σαλμων. Mark  
Ant. Lib. 2. Sect. 3.

ὁ ἐν σοὶ Θεός. Lib. 3.  
Sect. 5.

ὁ ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ Θεός. Lib.  
12. Sect. 26.

ἡ σωματικὴ φύσις Θεός.  
Animus humanus etiam  
nunc in corpore situs, sal-  
mon nuncupatur. Apul. de  
deo Socratis Justin. Mart.  
Apol. 2.

⊙ ⊙ ⊙

hardly got out. Let us therefore take heed how we betray our selves, and give way to Iniquity. Let us approve our selves to our Home-God. Conscience is always ready to speak to us; let our Ear be always ready to hear what it hath to say, and be very careful never to depart from it

Counsel, in going against the sense of our own Minds and Judgment. When once a Man hath consented to do that which is base and unworthy, as he hath made havock of his own Conscience, so he hath broken his Credit, which is a further Security, and great Preservative against Evil.

IV. Before and after contracted *Habits*, by frequent Use and repeated Acts of Evil, is not alike, as to the con-

cern

cerns of Eternity. Men are more what *Dis.III.*  
*they are used to, than what they are born*  
 to ; for Custom is a second Nature. Every Man hath himself as he useth himself. When Men lose all Government of themselves, they soon contract hardness and an injudicious Mind ; an undiscerning Mind, or as it is rendred *Rom. 1.*  
*28. Ἀδυνάμους νῦν, a Reprobate Mind and*  
*Conscience.* The Mind by abuse of it  
 self, or gross self-neglect, may come to  
 be as Salt that hath lost its Savour : So  
 the Mind loses its Power of Judging  
 and Discerning, and of Reproving and  
 Controlling. The Apostle speaks of some  
 that had *their Consciences seared as with*  
*a hot Iron,* 1 Tim. 4. 2. by reason where-  
 of they lose all Sense and Judgment ;  
 and then 'tis no wonder that nothing  
 will work upon them, because, as the  
 Apostle speaks, *Eph. 4. 19. They are past*  
*feeling.* Which Case is represented by  
 the Prophet, *Isa. 6. 9. Make the Heart*  
*of this People fat, and their Ears heavy,*  
*that they may not hear.* And there is no  
 place in all the Scripture so often refer-  
 red to as this place ; it is referred to by  
 all the Evangelists, and in the Acts of  
 the Apostles, and in the Epistle to the  
 Romans. And when this is the Case,  
 that

Κεκαυτη-  
 ειασμενοι  
 ὡς σιδηρον  
 σιδηρον. 1 Τιμ.  
 4. 2.  
 Πεπερασ-  
 μενοι τὴν  
 καρδιαν.



Vol. I. that Men have grossly neglected or abused themselves, and brought themselves by wicked Practises into the love of Sin and Vice, and dislike of Goodness; then it comes to pass with them, that *seeing, they see not, and do not perceive; and hearing, they hear, and do not understand.* And this place is no less than six times referred to in the New Testament, as giving an account of this place of the Prophet. We many times wonder to see Men act so contrary to all Advice and Counsel, to all sober Judgment, and to plain Scripture, against the true Interests of their Souls, and bodily Health, to the consuming of their Estates, ruin of their Credits, to the undoing of their Families; and all this without any manner of Profit or Advantage; so that a Man may say to them as the Apostle, *Gal. 3. 1. Who hath bewitched you?* To see Men run on so desperately, and to disclaim all Rules of Government, and to practise without any manner of Consideration: not to be limited by Right and Justice, against all Advice and Counsel, against all Threatnings too, having neither the Fear of God, or Regard to Man: One would think they are besotted and act like Mad-men. But this is

the

the Account : they have brought them-  
 selves into an unnatural Estate ; and  
 are not now as God brought them in-  
 to the World, nor like to continue so  
 long here as they might have done. But  
 as the wise Man saith, *Ecc. 7. 17. Be*  
*not overmuch wicked, neither be thou fool-*  
*ish, why shouldest thou dye before thy time?*  
 For want of Self-government the Wick-  
 ed are like to dye before their time,  
 and often by their own Hands too. How  
 shall these Men give an Account of  
 themselves, when they had a fairer al-  
 lowance of time, and would not use  
 it? How odious are those that lay vio-  
 lent Hands upon themselves? The Law  
 doth not allow them the common place  
 of Burial. Now all Intemperance is of  
 the same Nature. Though Men do  
 not intend it, yet they take a course to  
 shorten their Days, and their Sin goes  
 before hand unto Judgment. A Man  
 would think that Rational Nature  
 should not be so Depraved ; but that we  
 have woful experience of it. Inso-  
 much that the Prophet, *Jer. 6. 15.* says  
 of some, *Were they ashamed when they*  
*had committed Abomination? Nay, they*  
*were not ashamed, neither could they Blush.*  
 All shame is laid aside, and that which

Vol. I. is the Governour of Man, τὸ ἡγεμονικόν constituted by God, Reason and Understanding is dethroned, and brutish Sense set up in its stead, and Men give up themselves to Passion, Malice, Envy, Fury, and Revenge; and are Insolent, Arrogant, Haughty, and Unreasonable whereas God made no such, nor ever brought any such order into the World. These Men came into the World upon the same terms with other men; but they have made themselves such by abuse of themselves. And now they will tell you, they *cannot do otherwise*; they *cannot*; why? because they have contracted evil Habits, by ill use, Custom, and Practice; and are not willing to be at the Pains to work them off; which through the Grace of God, and by a little Violence to themselves at the beginning, they might effect.

V. The times of God's *gracious Visitation* in Mercy and Kindness to Men's Souls; these are not like those times wherein God *suffers Men to walk after their own ways*. And to make this out I propose three things.

I. That



1. That God is neither at first nor last, wanting in Necessaries to any of his Creatures to save them harmless, and to bring them to Good. Dis.III.

2. God doth never reject the endeavours of Repentance, nor cast off any true Penitent.

3. God doth not do always alike; nor can we in Reason expect, but that if we trifle and dally with God, and consent to Iniquity, and refuse the Voice of God and of our own Conscience, and put our selves out of his Hand, that he should always attend the leisure of such Dalliers. Though neither at first, nor last is he wanting in Necessaries, nor doth ever reject true Repentance; yet he will not wait our leisure. Therefore the times of God's Grace, and particular Visitation in Mercy and Kindness to the Souls of Men, these are far otherwise then *other times* are, and most fit for Men to return to God in, and to answer his Call. This is excellently described, *Job 33. 14.* where it is said, *God speaketh once, yea twice, yet Man perceiveth it not. 15. By dream and by Vision in the Night, i. e. to turn them*  
F 2 from

Vol. I. from their evil ways. And when God does so, Men may hear and turn to him; for the Grace of God is not in vain; but by the assistance which he doth afford Men, they are enabled, notwithstanding the impotency of their Nature, to do that which God calls them unto, and for which his Grace was afforded; if they do make use thereof, to the purpose for which he did afford it: And there is no doubt, but he will give more, as they improve what he first affords; *For to him that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance,* Matt. 13. 12. Sometimes God doth visit us by some cross Providence; sometimes he doth frustrate evil designs; sometimes he doth visit by Sicknes, Diseases and Pain; and these are to be look'd on as God's awakening of us.

Now to make out my Observation, *That all times are not alike.* Was it alike with *Saul* when he was making havock of the Church, and haling Men and Women to Prison, that professed the Name of Christ; and when *Christ Jesus* appeared to him in a Vision from Heaven; saying, *Acts* 9. 4. *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* It was not alike with the Cripple, *Acts* 3. 6. when he

lay

lay so many Years at the Gate, and Dis.III.  
 when *Peter* said unto him, *Rise up and walk.* It was not alike with him that  
 lay at the Pool so many Years, and  
 was not able to go in of himself, nor  
 to get any one to help him; as when he  
 was spoken to to *Rise up and walk*, *Joh.*  
*5. 8. Elisba, 1 Kings 19. 19.* was but a  
 common Man till *Elijah* call'd him. The  
 Child might have continued dead long  
 enough, *2 Kings 4. 34.* had not *Elias*  
 stretched himself upon it. The *Beasts*  
 that were affected, *Gen. 7. 8, 9.* went  
 into the Ark but the rest tarried abroad  
 and perished in the flood. *Lazarus*,  
*Joh. 11. 43.* under our Saviour's Power  
 though dead fours days, is brought to  
 Life again. When this Voice from God,  
*Eph. 5. 14. Awake thou that sleepest, and*  
*arise from the dead, and Christ shall give*  
*thee Life,* is heard, the effect will fol-  
 low. There is a great deal of diffe-  
 rence between the day of God's Grace  
 and Power, and Man's Weakness and  
 Infirmities. Sometimes we are more  
 than Men through Divine Grace and  
 Assistance; other times we are less than  
 our selves. It was so with *David*; when  
 the Spirit of God was upon him, how  
 doth he *defie the Armies of the Aliens*;



Vol. I. but at another time, *I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul.* A vast difference there is, when we are under Divine Motion, and when not; and therefore every Man ought when he is in a good Disposition, and well Affected, to follow those Impressions, for then that will be done which at another time will not be done.

VI. There is a vast difference between the flourishing condition of *Life, Health and Strength*; and the Hour of *Sickness, Weakness and Death*. In the former there is the Vigour of Nature; in the latter 'tis enough for a Man to bear his Infirmities. The most we can then expect to do, is to bear up against the Pangs of Death, and dismal Apprehensions of it. *And he is mad that hath a days work to do when he is going to Bed.* We see what great mischief came upon one's being late on his Journey, *Judg. 19.* The *Levite* being overtaken in the Night. We must know that the work of Conversion is a sober, serious and deliberate work, and ought not to be deferred to Sickness and the hour of Death; which is an hour of haste, hurry and confusion. It is the greatest business

fineness of Life, and of concernment to Eternity; and shall we prefer things that are Trifles in comparison, and bestow all our time, and thoughts and care upon them, and leave that which is Fundamental to the State of Eternity to the last? especially considering,

Dis.III.

*First*, That no Man is sure of warning, or of a moderate leisurely Sickness. Some drop down all on the sudden, and never have the use of Reason to speak a Word; as they that die of Apoplexies, Lethargies and the like. Many die before either they themselves, or they that are about them, are aware. But if they die not so soon, a Man may be *non compos mentis* through the height of his Disease. And if not so, there is very great danger of Despairing; if the Foundation of Hope be not laid before. For take it for granted, *There are none so much in danger of Despairing at the time of Death, as they which have been most Presumptuous in the course of their Lives.*

Again, the Enemy of our Souls, who hath been so ready to deceive us in Life, will double his diligence at the hour of Death. So that, if we are not *now* able

Vol. I to withstand his Temptations, how shall we be able to do it, when we shall have less Ability, and he come upon us with more Force and Violence.

Further, Sometimes Men expect assistance from Friends ; but they may be absent when we want them ; or they may prove like *Job's* Friends, miserable Comforters. But if this should be otherwise, it is then too late to begin a new Scene of Life, and learn the knowledge of Religion. For Knowledge is leisurely gotten, and with difficulty. But however, *that* is no time for Practice. If a Man could be made fit for it, and taught in a Moment, he hath no time to perform and exercise Religion. The Mind cannot be discharged of its ill Habits in a Moment, which have been settled by Conversation, and the Work of a Man's Life.

VII. And *lastly, Now, and Hereafter*, the Present and the Future, this World and the World to come, are not alike ; for the concerns of our Souls. For now is the time of working out our Salvation ; the next World will be for Reckoning, and in Judgment : As this Life leaves us,

Eternity



Eternity will find us. See therefore what great Advantages we have in this day, and let us make use of them. We have the direction of Holy Scripture, which we may read as often as we will : We have Friends and Guides for the Instruction of our Souls ; we have all God's Institutions and Appointments, and the Divine Spirit's Assistance, and the Gospel Promises to assure us that our Applications to God shall not be in vain, if they be sincere. But then for *Hereafter* ; what Word of Promise in all the Bible, for any thing that is to be done by us hereafter ? What Scripture doth say, that that may be done hereafter which is now neglected ? No. We read, *Prov.1.26. That because I called, and ye would not answer, I will then laugh at your Destruction, and mock when your Fear cometh.* And *Luke 16.* we read of the Rich Glutton, that he is Tormented ; and Poor *Lazarus*, that made an Advantage of his Poverty, and did his Work in this World, *he is Comforted.* If therefore we are real, sincere, and hearty in our Religion ; we shall not put it off. Matters of Weight and Moment we do not put off at large ; but we appoint a fit and convenient time ;  
and

Vol. I. and if the thing be of Concernment,  
 we will appoint a time near and certain;  
 for Delays and Put-offs are next to Denials.

From hence I infer.

1. That we are to *discern* the Time.
2. That we are to *use* the Time. And
3. That we are to *recover* the Time which is lost, or mispent.

1. That we are to *discern* the Time. This was wanting in them, *Luke 12.56. Ye Hypocrites, ye can discern the Face of the Sky, and of the Earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?* This, as it argues Stupidity, so it is a forerunner of Ruin. *Luke 19. 44. They shall lay thee even with the Ground, and thy Children within thee, and they shall not leave in thee one Stone upon another, because thou knewest not the time of thy Visitation.* This is an account of *Jerusalem's* Doom. To know time and season in every Profession and way of Living, is a principal piece of Skill. No good is to be done in any way, if this be not understood,

stood, Eccles. 3. 11. *He hath made every thing beautiful in his time.* And ver. 1. *Dis.III.*

*To every thing there is a Season, and a time to every purpose under Heaven.* And the Misery of Man is great, because he does not discern this time, Eccl. 8. 6. *Because to every purpose there is time and Judgment, therefore the Misery of Man is great upon him.* For the purpose of Religion, the time of Youth, and Nature's Strength; the time before Men are acquainted with Evil; the time of God's Assistance, Indulgence, Grace, and favourable Acceptance, are most proper. These make the time properly for working. Elder Years are attended with Weakness and Infirmities, which greatly indispose for Action; especially if we are to begin a new thing. This is rather a time of Patience and Passion, than of Work.

2. That we *use* the Time. That time is lost, that is not used. The virtue of it consists in the use of it. The true improvement of time is in the recovery of our selves by Reconciliation with God: Our Minds being renewed, our Losses supplied, and our Persons recommended. 'Tis an Argument of the severest



Vol. I. severest Reproach and Challenge, that a Man is at Years of Understanding, and yet his Mind is not informed : No Rule of Life and Action considered and examined. This is to moralize Solomon's Proverb, *Prov. 24. 30. I went by the Field of the Slothful, &c.* Every one's Mind is his Field, and the Sluggard's Mind is overgrown with Thistles. A Man may be ashamed to have lived so long in the World, to so little purpose ; when his Time is gone, and his Work not done : Wise for other things, only uninstructed, or else careless in Matters of the highest Concernment and greatest Importance between God and their Consciences.

I may add that Time is burdensome, if we have not Employment for it. We have a Phrase, *To drive away time.* Alas for its Consequence ; *Ab hoc momento pendet Eternitas.* There is a reference of Time to Eternity. We should be sure to carry on our main Work with the Time ; and if we be short in Circumstances, not to fail in Substance. Let nothing less than this be the account of the improvement of Time , that our Minds are discharged of all unnatural Dispositions, whatsoever we have acquired

quired that jarrs with the Principles of **Dis.III.**  
God's Creation in us ; that we have  
gotten the Victory of our Passions, taken  
our selves off from foolish Affections  
and fond Imaginations, from being car-  
ried away after the guise of this mad  
and sinful World : That our Faculties  
be planted with Divine Graces, Fruits  
of the Divine Spirit : That we be in  
Constitution and Temper, in Conversa-  
tion and Practice ; conformable to Christ's  
Doctrine, through Christ destroying in  
us the Works of the Devil, and com-  
municating to us the Divine Nature :  
That our Persons be reconciled, pleasing,  
acceptable to God, through Christ's Me-  
diation and Intercession. 'Tis a reproach  
to us to number our selves by Years, Fif-  
ty, Seventy, Eighty : These things be-  
ing not done, in which the only true  
account of time is. Further I add by  
way of *Caution*, notwithstanding the dif-  
ference of time.

*First*, I tell no Man (take him as I find  
him) that it is impossible for him to re-  
pent ; for I know not the extent of God's  
Grace.

*Secondly*, I say to no Man, That if he  
does repent it will be too late to find Mer-  
cy.

Vol. I. cy. For I know not the length of God's  
 ~~~~~ Patience, and Repentance doth alter the  
 Case. But this I seriously advertise. If
 we will be true to our own Souls, and not
forsake our own Mercies, let us take the ad-
 vantage of God's particular Applicati-
 on to us; then act when God acts upon
 us. The sacred Scriptures thus declare,
 Prov. 1. 23. *Turn ye at my Reproof, be-
 hold I will pour out my Spirit unto you.*
 Prov. 8. 17. *Whoso seeks me early shall
 find me.* Psal. 32. 6. *For this shall every
 one that is Godly pray unto thee, in a time
 when thou mayest be found.* Isa. 55. 6. *Seek
 ye the Lord while he may be found, call up-
 on him while he is near.* For this business
 of Religion is no slight or perfunctory
 Work; 'tis exprest in Scripture, by
 what imports a mighty Change, being
 made *new Creatures*, not by Transub-
 stantiating our Natures, but by Trans-
 forming our Minds, and mending our
 Tempers; by being partakers of the Di-
 vine Nature; by being created after
 God in Righteousness and true Holiness;
 not by being Godhead with God, but by
 being *renewed in the Spirit of our Minds.*
By perfecting Holiness in the fear of God.
By crucifying the old Man and his Deeds.
By purging our selves from all filthiness of
 the

the Flesh and Spirit. By putting off the Dis.III.
body of Sin: And by mortifying the Flesh,
with the Affections and Lusts.

Can we reasonably think that such a Work can be done in a Moment, or in the most inconvenient Circumstances of Old Age, and the decays of Nature, or on a Death-bed? For is not Old Age burden enough, except it be attended with the sad remembrance of a careless Life?

3. *Recover* Time lost, so far as is possible, with double Industry, Care, and Diligence, *Eph. 5. 16.* upon this Encouragement, *Habenti dabitur*; To him that hath shall be given, and *ab utente non auferetur*, and from him that useth it shall not be taken away. Think that for this purpose, God hath so long continued thee in being. 'Tis safe to make the best Interpretation of God's dealing with thee, which is to encourage Application to him. For this is the contrary to turning the Grace of God into Wantonness. The credit of a good beginning is lost, if we persevere not in Goodness. The disrepute occasioned from the Vanity of the younger Years is abated by the seriousness and stayedness

Vol. I. *ness of the Age of Understanding.* Since we cannot absolve our selves from any ill use or abuse of time past, considering the improveableness of time, and the reference thereof to Eternity : Let us carefully redeem that which remains ; rescue it out of the Huckster's Hands ; vindicate it to the noblest Purposes : that the remainder of it through true Improvement, may answer the account of the whole.

Nothing will lye heavier upon our Minds, when we come to dye, then that we have neglected the day of Grace, been wanting to our selves in Preparations for Eternity, by bad use of time ; depraved our Minds so as to go out of the World in far worse state and condition than we entred into it.

The *Persuasives* hereunto are,

1. That here is *Hearts-case* and Satisfaction in the motion of Repentance ; in that we have revoked, and morally voided that which should not have been done. *The first best is not to have done ill ; the second is to condemn it.* This is all we can do in the Case, all else must be left to God. And this makes the Case Compassionable ; and when the Case

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Case is such, there is nothing to hinder Dis.III:
God to shew Mercy.

2. *Entrance into Eternity* mainly depends upon the immediate Disposition of the Mind. Wherefore we are to take all care to depart hence in Renunciation of the Guise of this mad World; in Reconciliation with the Rule of Righteousness; in agreeableness of Temper with the Heavenly State.

3. We have done a great deal of harm in the World by bad Example, strengthening the Hands of the Wicked: Let us take it off by Renunciation of it, by condemning our selves in it, by giving Testimony to Truth and Right. This is the least that can be done in all reason: Else we may be said to be *alive to do mischief in the World, when we are dead and gone.*

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DISCOURSE IV.

*The Joy which the Righteous have
in God.*

Preached in the New Chappel,
December 7. 1668.

PSALM xxxiii. 1.

*Rejoyce in the Lord, O ye Righte-
ous, for Praise is comely for the
Upright.*

AND can we meet in this *New Stru-* Dis. IV.
cture and Fabrick, raised out of its
former Ruines, and not perform the
Duty of the Text? If I be not mistaken,
this is the first that is again employed
in Sacred Use, since the dismal and fatal
Fire. Let those that are here present,
give a good Example to all that shall
follow after; and let us now, as
the Text calls upon us, Rejoyce and
G 2 Triumph

Vol. I. Triumph in the Divine Goodness: For
 ~~~~~ Praise is comely for the good and upright Man. The remarkable Providences, and happier Dispensations of God, call upon us to be glad in the Lord, and thankful for his Benefits. God hath not only given us leave to rebuild our Ruins, and repair our waste Places, but he hath been with us, and given us Encouragement to this good Undertaking. We read that the *Jews* when they returned out of Captivity, and had but rebuilt their Walls, they had Meetings of Joy and Triumph; as you find it among other places, *Ezra* 3. 11. and 6. 16. and *Nehem.* 12. 27. And this is not only Pious, But a transcendant Act of Faith, and confidence in God; upon such occasions to Bless him, to Rejoice in him, and to Praise him. And they are of the basest, and most sordid Temper, that are not affected with the Expressions of the Divine Goodness and Kindness. And truly if we do not do the former Duty of the Text, we shall fail in the latter. If we be not glad and rejoyce in the Lord, we shall never be thankful nor bless his Holy Name. For pray what Thankfulness when the Heart is possessed with Melancholy, and the Spirit full of  
 Heaviness?



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Heaviness? But besides this, it is the ge-  
neral direction of Wisdom, to *acknow-  
ledge God in all our Ways*; therefore in  
things remarkable, so much the more;  
and 'tis the effect of Religion to do it;  
for what is Religion but a Participation,  
Imitation, and Resemblance of the Di-  
vine Goodness, both in the Temper of the  
Subject, and in its Expressions of Grati-  
tude, Ingenuity, Acknowledgment, and  
the like. I know no other result of Reli-  
gion but this. And surely were Religion  
estimated by *this*, we should endeavour  
after it, and be all good Friends, and he  
would be accounted the best Man, that  
is most free and ingenious in the sense of  
Divine Goodness. At least let us not  
neglect to make Acknowledgments to  
God upon those eminent Advantages  
that the course of his Providence doth  
afford; such as are eminent Successes in  
our Undertakings, and happy Recove-  
ries out of any Trouble and Calamity;  
and giving us to see Light after Dark-  
ness. Such Opportunities as these, Pi-  
ous Souls have been wont to close with-  
al. And it is noted of one, a very good  
Person, a King of great Fame, as a  
thing that was very unnatural and un-  
becoming him, and very ill resented by

Vol. I. God, that he did *not* render unto the Lord according to the great benefit that was bestowed upon him. Thus it is reported of *Hezekiah*. *2 Chron. 32. 21. But his Heart was lifted up.* Now Pride is opposite to the Acknowledgment of God and giving thanks to him. He that hath his Heart lifted up, will arrogate and assume to himself, and this seems to have been his Fault; for which Wrath was upon him, and the *Israel* of God. Now let such Failings as these were, though in former Ages, be for our Admonition, as the Apostle tells us, that *things before us were for our Example upon whom the ends of the World are come, 1 Cor. 10. 11.* If God had not taken Pleasure in us, and in this great Undertaking, to Restore and Rebuild this ancient City, he might have obstructed and prohibited the same; as *Joshua* did curse any one that undertook Rebuilding of *Jericho*. You shall find the Curse, *Joshua 6. 26.* and in effect, *1 Kings 16. 34.* Therefore we have cause, both to be sensible of the Divine Goodness, in that his good Hand of Providence hath been over us, and given Success to our Endeavours; and scattered our Fears and sad Apprehensions, and given us to see so much of Restoration

Restauration as at this Day, and as this *Dis. IV.*  
Place gives Testimony of. 

In the Text we have two things.

I. The *Duty* : And

II. The *Reason* of it.

I. The *Duty* is exprest in two Words, *Rejoyce in the Lord, and Praise him* : And the *Reason* in these Words, *For it is comely so to do.*

*Rejoyce in the Lord.* Then certainly Religion is not such a thing as 'tis represented to the World by many Men. For it is look'd upon as a doleful, troublesome melancholy thing ; hurtful to the Body, and disquieting to the Souls of Men. But see whether this be true. Look upon Religion in its Actions and Employment : And what are they? *Rejoyce and give Thanks.* Are not these Actions that are grateful and delightful ? What doth transcend Divine Joy, and ingenious Acknowledgments ? But then,

II. The *Reason.* *It is comely.* Whatsoever is the true Product of Religion,



Vol. I. is Grateful, Beautiful, and Lovely. There is nothing in Religion that is Dishonourable, Selfish ; that is particular , and narrow-spirited. No, it is a Principle of the greatest Nobleness, and Generousness in the World. They are worldly Spirits, that are low , narrow, and contracted : The truly Religious are most Noble and Generous ; and are the freest from Narrowness, Discontent, and Selfishness. There is the most solid Peace, and most grounded Satisfaction found in it. Job 10. 5. *The Triumph of the Wicked is short, and the Joy of the Hypocrite is but for a Moment.* But for the good Man and the Righteous, Psal. 4. 7. *Thou hast put more gladness into my Heart, then when their Corn, and Wine, and Oil encreased.* And Isa. 41. 16. *I will glory in the Holy One of Israel.* And Isa. 61. 10. *I will greatly rejoyce in the Lord, and my Soul shall be joyful in my God.* Nay in the greatest Streights and Exigency. Hab. 3. 17. *Though the Fig-tree should not blossom, though there should be no Fruit in the Vine, and the Labour of the Olive should fail, &c. Yet will I rejoyce in the Lord, and joy in the God of my Salvation.*

I. Rejoyce

I. *Rejoyce in the Lord.*

1. For *Himself*; because of his own Goodness.

2. In *other things*, with respect to him. But

1. For *Himself*. 1<sup>st</sup>. God is the most Excellent Object in the World. And 2<sup>dly</sup>. what he is in himself, he *is to the Righteous*, who have Interest in him, and who are in Reconciliation with him. 'Tis Vanity and Emptiness to Glory in Men, and ordinary things, and where there is no Property; though things are Excellent, yet there is no Glory in that Case. Men are prone to Envy; therefore it is requisite to Glorifying, that Men have Property, that Men think upon God as their *own*; for where Men have no Property they are apt to say, *What am I the better?* The devilish Nature delights in God the less, because of his Goodness; for the more good God is, the further is he removed from their Regenerate Temper. 'Tis our unsuitableness and unlikeness to God, that hinders our delight and satisfaction in him. 'Tis a great saying, *Whosoever is pleased with God, pleaseth God*. Whosoever, I say, is pleased with that which God is pleased with, is pleasing unto God.

Vol. I. God. But they that are in an unsuitable Temper and Disposition ; (as the unregenerate Man, and sensual Spirit, as the Atheistical and Prophane, and those that are Malicious and Devilish) they are in a Spirit opposite to the Spirit of God, and therefore they are offended with God as well as God is offended with them. But *whosoever are pleased with God, God is pleased with them*: But to the Wicked and Unregenerate, God himself (as good as he is) he is a burden. For it is the Temper of Wickedness to say unto God, *Depart from us, for we do not desire the knowledge of thy ways*, Job 21. 14. For it is universally true, that things are to Persons, according as they are in State, Spirit, and Temper. Let Men pretend Love to the things of God never so much, they will not relish them, unless they be born of God. 'Tis they that are Naturalized to Heaven, that relish and favour Divine Things. That which is born of the World, is Enmity against God. But,

2. Our rejoicing must be with some respect to God ; and though it be in *other things*, yet it must be in the Lord. And this is done when,

1. We



1. We acknowledge God Originally, as the *Fountain* from whence all good things come ; and the first cause 'of all Good. When we are sensible that we receive from him, and hold of him, and have what we enjoy from his Bounty.

2. When we account *God better than* all other Enjoyments whatsoever , and have all things in subordination to him.

3. When we look upon all our Enjoyments as fruits of the Divine Goodness ; and consider them as Enjoyments.

*First, To endear God to us, and*

*Secondly, Of Obliging us to God.* For you know a Courtesie is accounted as lost, if the Party doth not gain the good Will and Affection of the Person, to whom he shewed kindness. Even so it is in respect of God ; if God be not endear'd to us, by his Kindness, and we obliged to him for his Goodness, all is lost. But,

4. We

4. We then may be said to *Rejoyce in the Lord*, when we make God the *final end*, and make all things subservient to his Glory; and account our selves bound to dispose of what he gives us according to his appointment, and for the ends of Vertue. And to this purpose, That we may rejoyce in the good things, that through Providence we do enjoy, with some respect to God; two things are necessary.

1. It is necessary to give God *place* in the World.

2. That we *take pleasure* in the Works of his Providence. For there is nothing that God doth, or that he doth permit to be done; but it doth offer to the Intelligent Mind, some *Notion from God*, and cause some observance of God in the World; and doth give advantage to some Divine Contemplation, and so doth put the Soul upon some Action of Acknowledgment and Adoration of God.

To enforce this *Joy in God*; I subjoyn two things.

1. That

1. That Joy is *necessary* to the Life of Man. The Apostle hath told us, that *worldly sorrow causeth Death*. Sorrow and Sadness, Melancholy and Discontent spoils the Temper of a Man's Mind; it viciates the humours of the Body; it prevents the Divine, and hinders the Physician. For the *Divine* deals by Reason; but this being obliterated, he can do nothing: For he applies himself to the Mind and Understanding; but Sorrow and Melancholy hinders the receiving of true Reason, and then his Work is at an end. And it also hinders the *Physician*; for if the Mind be Discomposed by Melancholy, it doth not afford due Benevolence to the Body. You have an Instance in *Nebucadnezzar*, who was by Melancholy transformed into a Beast. Not that he was so by external Form; but he did so esteem himself; and things are as Men conceive them. The Sour and Melancholy, they are unthankful to God, and cruel to themselves, and peevish in their Converse: So that Joy and Rejoycing is *necessary* in respect to our selves. But

2. In



*The Joy which the Righteous*

2. In *respect to God* ; Joy and Rejoycing is safe for us, and preservative to us, as I shall shew you in sundry Respects.

1. If we have respect to God in our Joy, we can never *Transgress*.

2. We cannot *exceed*, nor any ways misbehave our selves : We cannot do our selves any harm. As we read of some that have suddenly died, by reason of Joy, at the tidings of good, as well as sudden bad News.

3. Our Joy will then be *sincere* and *pure*, not frothy and fantastical.

4. It will *offend none*, nor be irksome to any.

5. It will always keep company with *Gratitude* and *Humility*. For observe it in the Text, they are made reciprocal, to rejoyce in the Lord, and to give thanks unto him.

6. It will always leave us in a good *temper* ; which worldly Joy will not do.

7. It

7. It is wholly separate from all *Sur-Dif.IV.*  
*feiting*, Drunkenness, and Uncleanneſs ;  
 and will free the Soul from the *Spiritual*  
*Sins* of Haughtineſs ; Insolency , and  
 Self-aſſuming. If our Triumph be in  
 the Lord , it ſeparates from ſenſual  
 things, and from the *Spiritual Sins* of  
 Pride and Arrogancy. Therefore let  
 there be always ſomething that is *Spiri-*  
*tual* in the ground, reaſon, or occaſion,  
 or motive of your Joy. Some notion  
 of God's Providence in all your Mirth.  
 Sadneſs and Joy are things of the moſt  
 powerful Influence in the Life of Man ;  
 the former breaks his Heart, and the lat-  
 ter many times greatly Transports him.  
 But now an Eye to God in both, doth  
 poiſe and balance them, and makes the  
 Soul ſafe and ſteady under them. And ſo  
 much for the former part of the Text,  
*Rejoyce in the Lord.*

II. [*For Praise is comely for the Up-*  
*right.*] 1<sup>ſt</sup>. Theſe Words you ſee are  
 Exegetical to *Rejoycing*. *Rejoyce in the*  
*Lord*, for [*Praise is comely.*] If Praise  
 and Rejoycing were not the ſame, there  
 were no Argument in the Words ,  
*For Praise is comely.* And then, 2<sup>dly</sup>.  
*Uprightneſs* is Exegetical to *Righteouſ-*  
*neſs*. *Rejoyce in the Lord*, O ye Righteous,  
 for

Vol. I. *for Praise is comely for the Upright.* By

Uprightness is here meant our Sincerity and Integrity, our honest Meaning and true Intention; which through God's gracious acceptance is our Righteousness. *We are, none of us, at all better than we mean:* Our gracious God takes us by what we understand, intend and mean. And the truth is here, there is no Dispensation for failure in Intention. For Misapprehension God doth grant allowance, and dispence with Humane Frailties; but for a failing of Intention there is no Dispensation. Fail here and you are *Hypocrites*, and false-hearted; and therefore Uprightness is our Perfection, and our Righteousness. For either you intend well, or you do not; if you do, you are Upright, if you do not, you are Hypocrites. It goes mighty far in Religion, that a Man doth simply honestly, and in plainness of Heart mean and intend God and Goodness, Righteousness and Truth. He is Upright that means well: though he be in many particulars mistaken and incumbred with Weakness, yet he is Righteous in the sight of God, through God's gracious acceptance. Therefore it becomes us to be highly Charitable one towards another;



other ; since God is so Gracious, and Dis.IV:  
sets such a value upon our good  
Meanings, and sincere Intentions, as to  
account of this for Righteousness, ei-  
ther in Practice or Opinion. If a Man  
in the Integrity of his Heart doth ho-  
nestly mean God, Goodness, Righte-  
ousness, and Truth ; God will receive  
him. *Every Man's Mind is himself ; and  
a Man is what he means and intends ;  
and what a Man means not , that he is  
not, that he does not.* And this I have  
said because in the Text there are two  
Words made Exegetical, *Praise and Rejoy-  
cing ; Righteousness and Uprightness. Re-  
joyce in the Lord, O ye Righteous, for Praise  
is comely for the Upright.*

This remains to be spoken to : And  
'tis a gallant Notion in this Age that  
tends so much to Atheism.

*Praise is comely.* This is spoken by  
way of Argument, and 'tis no Argu-  
ment if this be not true, that *there is a  
Reason for what we do from the things  
themselves.* I mean this, and if you  
grant but *this*, that there is that which  
of it self is Good and Comely, Just and  
H Right,

Dis. IV. Right, and there is that which of it self is Sinful and Abominable; we exclude Atheism out of the World. And this must be acknowledged, otherwise there is no Argument in these Words, *For Praise is comely*. If all things are alike, and no difference of things, one thing is no more comely than another. Now because this is an excellent Rule, and a way to exclude Atheism out of the World, I will shew you that this Notion is abundant in Scripture, viz. That *Goodness and Truth are first in things*; and though they are so in Mens Apprehensions *secondarily*, yet they are *first* in themselves; and that Men live in a lye, and are in a lye, if their Apprehensions be not conformed to things in their reality and existence. Several Scriptures have this notice: *Phil. 4. 8. run upon it all along. Whatsoever things are Venerable, Just, Honest, Praise-worthy, &c.* How insignificant were these Sayings, if all things were alike as Men would have them? So *Rom. 13. 13. walk decently or honestly. I Cor. 7. 35. I Cor. 14. 40. Let all things be done decently. I Cor. 11. 13. Is it comely, is it decent? Eccle 5. 18. Psal. 92. 1. It is good to sing Praise*

to the Lord. Psal. 147. 1. Praise is come-  
ly, &c. Dis.IV.

The Reason of things is, That Law and Truth which none must Transgress: I say, the reason of things is a Law and Truth which none, either by Power or Priviledge may Transgress. And for this I will give you such Arguments for Conviction, that greater cannot be given: For I tell you, *'Tis a Law in Heaven, and that which God takes notice of in all his Dispensations to his Creatures.* It is that which God will give an account of himself by, to the Understandings of his Creatures. For this I will produce many Scriptutes; *Righteousness and Judgment are the habitation of his Throne,* Psal 97. 2. Can any Man understand this to be nothing but what is Arbitrary? *Job 8. 3. and 34. 12. Will he by Power pervert that which is Right?* Rom. 3. 3. *Is there Unrighteousness with God? God forbid.* How insignificant are all these Expressions if all things be alike and Arbitrary, if the difference of things be nothing else but Fantastical and Conceited? And yet this and much more must the Atheist say, or else his Opinion is



Vol. I. worth nothing. For if there be a difference in things, he will be Self-condemned. We have *Abraham's* Question, *Gen. 18. 25. Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do Right?* These were certainly presumptuous, arrogant, and bold Speeches to be said to God, if my Notion were not true; for these conclude Will, and shut it up, as having no Rule in this Law of Right. So *Acts 17. 31.* It is said, *God shall judge the World in Righteousness.* If there be not difference in things, and a Rule of Right, these Words signifie nothing. I could quote you hundreds of places for this, *All the ways of God are ways of Truth, of Righteousness, and of Judgment.* Can any Man imagine, that this signifies no more, but that things are as *Will* would have them. Therefore I tell you, (and it is that by which you and all the World shall be judged) That these are not bare Words and Titles, not Shadows and Imaginations. There is that which is decent and fitting to be done; or that which is equal; that which is fair; that which is comely and seemly: *There is that which holds of it self, and is decent, comely*

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comely and fitting. *Truth and Good-* Dis.IV  
*ness are first in things, then in Persons ;* ~~~~~  
 and 'tis out Duty to observe them, and  
 our Uprightness to comply with them.  
 All things are not Arbitrary and Posi-  
 tive Constitution ; but there is that  
 which is Lovely and Comely in it self ;  
 and there is that which is Impure and  
 Ugly in its own Nature and Quality ;  
 and if any Man meddles with it, let him  
 be sure it will Disparage him, and ren-  
 der him Contemptible, Vile, and Base.  
 There is also that which is Generous ,  
 Noble and Worthy, and will gain Re-  
 pute and Credit to him that uses it. 'Tis  
 not all one for an Intelligent and Vo-  
 luntary Agent, to do one thing or an-  
 other ; for there are Rules of Right  
 wherewith all Intelligent Agents must  
 comply, and they do Righteously when  
 they do, and sinfully when they do  
 not. There is such a Turpitude in  
 some things, that there is no Priviledge  
 or Protection ; nothing that can be al-  
 ledg'd that will gain a Man liberty to do  
 them ; for they have an intrinsick Malig-  
 nity and Impurity ; and these things are  
 a Disparagement to any Person whatsoe-  
 ver. And there are things that are Just and  
 H 3 Righteous,

Vol. I. Righteous, Worthy and Generous, that  
 will Recompence the Person that is exercised in them.

And then God made Man with a Judgment of Discerning, and 'tis expected that Man should Judge, and Discern, and Reason concerning things. And this is not so much our Priviledge, as our Charge and Trust, to observe the difference of things. The whole Motion of the World below Men, is nulled upon a Moral Consideration; and no Morality to be found in any Agent below Man. The motions of all else are no better then Mechanick. Now this is the Foundation of Scripture, Exhortation and Admonition: We are to examine by Reason, and by Argument; because God applies to Reason and Judgment, and to Understanding, which is inseparable to Choice and Resolution.

In short, a Man is accomplished by two things, 1<sup>st</sup>. By being enlightned in his Intellectual Faculties. 2<sup>dly</sup>. By being directed in his Morals to refuse Evil, and to do Good; and to chuse and determine

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mine things according to the difference of them The 1<sup>st</sup>. is the Perfection of a Man's Understanding. The 2<sup>d</sup>. is the Goodness of his Mind. - Phil. 2. 13. Dis. IV.

*Work out your Salvation with fear, for it is God that worketh in you, &c.* This supposes a Judgment of Discerning; and then consequently, that God does expect that a Man, according to his Apprehension and Judgment, should chuse, resolve, and determine. Now where we are called upon to Work in the affair of Salvation: See how cautiously the Scripture speaks of it; Phil. 2. 12. *Work out your own Salvation, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good Pleasure.* From hence no body should be discouraged from the fence of his own Disability; nor Arrogate to himself, or be Presumptuous; *for God Worketh in him to will and to do of his Good Pleasure.* If this Notion were but well observed, a great part of some Controversies, at this day, would be Resolved; for Scripture doth Attribute to us that which God does, and bids us do that which God doth with us: That which we do is attributed to God; and that which God doth

Vol. I. by us, is both ascribed to God, and to us; we work, and God works; we are awakened, directed, and assisted by him. So that I think there is too much heat in many Controversies, and a right stating them would extinguish them from being in the World.

We see there is a direct and exact Government in Heavenly Bodies. When did ever the Sun fail? It were Prodigious if it should. And why should not *we* that are guided by Principles of Reason and Illumination, (which is a far greater Communication from God) why should we be so Irregular and Inconsistent, since the Lower Creation is so Regular and Uniform? For there is nothing of Conflagration in the Heavenly Motions, because no Oppositions. And if *we* were uniform to Principles of Reason and right Understanding, all Motions with us would be so, and tend to mutual Information and Edification; but not at all to Provocation, or Exasperation one of another.

Pray let me leave this Notion with you, That *there is a difference in things; there*

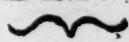
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there is that which is Comely, that Dis. IV.  
 which is Regular, Decent, and directed   
 according to Rule, and the standing  
 Principle of God's Creation. You see  
 how much time I have spent in the  
 Notion; or that which is the force of  
 the Argument: *We are to Rejoyce and*  
*give Thanks, because it is comely.* The  
 Reason lies in the Quality of the thing,  
 which doth suppose, that *there is a dif-*  
*ference in things*; by which the Atheist  
 is excluded out of the World: And  
 Mens Liberties restrained to that which  
 is Right. 'Tis no Rule to a Man's Acti-  
 ons to do that which he may maintain  
 by Power and Priviledge; but to do  
 that which is fit to be done, *Just* and  
*Right*: to comply in all things with  
 the *Reason of things*, and the *Rule of*  
*Right*, and in all things to be according  
 to the Nature, Mind, and Will of God;  
 The Law of Justice, the Rule of Right,  
 the Reason of things. These are the  
 Laws by which we are to Act and  
 Governour Lives, and we are all born  
 under the Power of them: And if this  
 be not true, this Argument of the Psal-  
 mist is Insignificant, *Praise the Lord, for*  
*it is comely.* The reason of things there-  
 fore



Vol. I. fore is our Rule both in Religion and  
 ~~~~~ Converse one with another ; and tho' these are different Forms of Speech, yet they are always in Conjunction. The Reason of the Mind is by these to be directed ; and indeed all Principles of Religion are founded upon the surest, most constant and highest Reason in the World. *There is nothing so intrinsically Rational as Religion is ; nothing so self-evident, nothing that can so justify it self, or that hath such pure Reason to commend it self as Religion hath.* For it gives an account of it self to our Judgments and to our Faculties ; and this God doth himself acknowledge, Isa. 5. 3. *Judge I pray you between me and my Vineyard.* So 1 Cor. 11. 13. *Judge in your selves, is it comely, &c.* He brings that for an Argument, the Indecency of it. But so much for the Notion, *That there is a difference in things ; that Good and Evil are first in things ; Right and Wrong first in things themselves.* This is not Arbitrary, nor Imagined, nor Determined by Power and Priviledge, ; but there is Good and Evil, Comely and Uncomely in things themselves. A Word of this Particular Case, and I have done.

Praise



Praise is comely. It is Natures Sense, 'tis the import of any Man's Reason : Every Man's Mind tells him that *this is decent* ; and no Man can have Peace, Quiet, and Satisfaction in the contrary ; unless he be sunk down into Baseness, and degenerated into a fordid Temer, he will acknowledge the Kindness of his Benefactor. Now because God doth infinitely transcend all the Benefactors in the World, if any Man doth not acknowledge his Goodness, and praise him for his Benefits ; he is sunk down into Baseness, and fallen beneath his Creation and Nature.

God loves us, and therefore he doth us Good : We love God because we are Partakers of his Benefits. Now Praise and Thanksgiving is all the Return that our Necessity and Beggery is capable of : And it is very comely for us, that are so much beholden to the Divine Goodness, to make our due Acknowledgments ; and therefore it is observed that in Ingratitude there is a Connexion of all Vice. All Disingenuity and Baseness are concentrated in the
Bowels

Vol. I. Bowels of Ingratitude. He that will
 ~~~~~ not be engaged by Kindness, no *Cords*  
*of Man will hold him.* It is observed  
 both by God and Man, as Degeneracy  
 in its ultimate issue, the greatest Depra-  
 vation that Nature is capable of, to be  
 insensible of Courtesies, and not to make  
 due Acknowledgments. How often doth  
*David* complain of those Persons, that  
 were obliged to him by kindness, that  
 they turned his Enemies, Psal 41, and  
 45. *He that sate at Meat with me hath*  
*lift up his Heel against me.* How is  
 he represented by him, as a most fordid  
 wretched Person, one that was degene-  
 rated to the fullest degree? And then  
 God himself complains, *Dent. 32. 15.*  
*Jesuran waxed fat and kicked, he forsook*  
*God that made him, and lightly esteemed*  
*the Rock of his Salvation.* God and  
 Man complains of the Ungrateful, be-  
 cause all Favours and Courtesies are lost.  
 Yea 'tis well observed, that it is the on-  
 ly way to make a desperate Enemy, to  
 bestow Kindness upon an unthankful  
 Person. And this is too well known,  
 that those that have been made Friends  
 by Courtesie, proving false, have been  
 the greatest Betrayers. Therefore of  
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all Persons and Tempers, the Insensible and Ungrateful are the worst. Yea truly these are the very Pests of the World, the Enemies of Humane Nature, they harden Mens Hearts, who otherways were free to do Courtesies, because they do not know but that they may make an Enemy. I will make this out (*viz.* The baseness of Ingratitude) in these two Words.

1. Because *nothing is more due to God than our Gratitude*; for he loadeth us with his Benefits, and is pleased to please us, and doth many things to gratifie us.

2. By this we give *Testimony of our Minds to God*. For we have nothing at all to Sacrifice to God, but the consent of our Minds; an Ingenuous Acknowledgment. We have nothing to bring him, but the consent of our Minds; and this the grateful Person doth, and by this he signifies, that if it were within his compass, he would requite the Divine Goodness; for 'tis not so much the Gift, as the Mind of the Giver. He that is unthankful is most full of himself;

Vol. I. self; and apt to think that all the World  
~~~~~ was made for him; and that all Men  
are bound to be his Servants, and to
attend his Purpose, and that he may
serve himself of all Mens Parts, Powers,
Priviledges and Opportunities; but he
himself is exempt from all Men: So
that he is an Enemy to God and Men.

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DISCOURSE V.

The Secret Blasting of Men.

PSALM xxxix. 11.

*When thou with Rebukes dost correct
Man for Iniquity, thou makest his
Beauty to consume away like a
Moth, surely every Man is Vanity.
Selah.*

Nothing is less true, nothing more Dis. V.
unbecoming us, limited, finite, 
and fallible Creatures, than the thought
of Independency and Self-sufficiency.
And indeed, the whole Creation of
God, in comparison with God himself, is
less than the Dust of the Balance: and
if you come to compare, will hold no
weight. Nothing becomes us more,
than to know what we are: nothing
befits us better, than that we know our
I own

Vol. I. own State, and to be sensible of our
 ~~~~~ own Dependence, and Necessity, and to  
 make due Acknowledgment to God. If  
 a Man seriously weigh these Words, he  
 will always veil to God, Humble himself,  
 submit and deprecate. So many things  
 there are Emphatical in these Words,  
*When thou, &c.*

Sin, on Man's part, is that that makes  
 him much more liable and obnoxious to  
 God, than he is in respect of his Crea-  
 ture-State : *When thou with Rebukes dost*  
*correct Man for Iniquity thou makest his*  
*Beauty,* (that that he values himself by;  
 that that is his only thing, his topEx-  
 cellency) *to consume away like a Moth,*  
 without any resistance, without any  
 stop, insensibly : So that he that doth  
 contemplate what is said in the former  
 part of the Words, will presently ac-  
 knowledge, that *every Man, even in his*  
*best Estate, is Vanity, altogether Vanity.*

These Words give an account of two  
 things, which are the matter of the great-  
 est Wonder.

*First,* How it comes to pass there are  
 so many and so great Evils in the World.

*Secondly,* How so many Persons come  
 to wither and fall away, and come to  
 nothing in the World. And these two

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are the greatest matters of *wonder* and admiration among men. Dis. V.

*First*, How it comes to pass that there are *so many and so great Evils* in the world : and the wonder is this , That God governs the world, and God is known by his Goodness : what, these evils from the hand of a good God ! how can this be ? The greatest questions that have ever been in the world, have been these two,

1. Whence *Evils* come ? And
  2. How it comes to pass they were not *subdued*, as soon as they did appear ?
- I believe it would puzzle the head of any one in the world to answer them ; if he do not learn an answer from Scripture. Now this place resolves you : you have here the cause of Evil, and you have here God challenging, controuling and rebuking it. For if you find out the procuring *Cause*, you find out all : not he that doth the thing, but he that was the cause of the thing being done, doth the mischief.

*Secondly*, Then how comes it to pass that *so many wither* in the world , with all advantages, Honour, Titles, Dignity and Estate, that they never spent their thoughts about getting ; and out-live



Vol. I. it all. Whereas you have others born  
 ~~~~~ Naked into the World ; and through  
 the Improvement of Natures powers,
 they rise to Estates and Revenues. How
 comes this to pass ? In these words you
 have an account. *When thou with rebukes
 dost correct a Man for iniquity, thou makest
 his beauty to consume away like a moth.*

These two considerations are enough
 to engage your Attention : Every body
 hath their Ears open to to hear Résoluti-
 ons of wonders.

In the words you have *four things.*

I. What is *intimated*, and that is, that
 sin is the Procuring cause of Punish-
 ment. *When thou with rebukes dost correct
 man for sin, &c.* Sin is the procuring
 cause of Punishment. It is sin that doth
 the World all the mischief that is in the
 World. A Fault deserves Punishment:
 the Fault going before, doth naturally
 draw on with it Punishment.

Culpa est
 meritam
 pena.
 Culpa na-
 turaliter
 trahit post
 se penam

II. Take notice of what is *supposed*,
 That God doth regularly and usually
 chastise sinners. God doth, as a thing
 becoming Him in the Government of
 the world, he doth controul sinners,
 and chastise men for sin, The word is
 very remarkable. *When thou with Re-
 bukes, &c.* which intimates something in
 secret:

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Secret : not only openly Punished in the Dis. V.
View of the world ; but sinners feel
checks and reproofs from God , which
unless they themselves tell , Others are
not aware of. An *internal* stroke ; for
these rebukes are *secret* ; though they
are certainly felt by those that are un-
der them , by-standers take no cogni-
zance of them. *The Torments of a man's*
own Breast are beyond any Evil that
befalls the Body : Trouble in a man's
Mind , is beyond the pain of the Stone
or Gout. For if a man's Mind be whole,
he can bear up against bodily infirmity:
But a wounded spirit who can bear? Prov.
18. 14.

Tormenta
pectoris.
Vulnera
Conscien-
tiæ.
Si Dii
Deaq; om-
nes, &c.
Tacitus &
Tiberius

III. Take notice what is *proposed* ;
That these Rebukes of God *blast* Men :
When thou with Rebukes correctest
Man for Sin, *thou makest his Beauty to*
consume. [*His Beauty*] that is, that which
is most desirable, that which is most
valuable ; his health, his wealth, his
friends, his internal peace, the parts of
his mind : for these are a man's excel-
lency, and all these are meant by his
Beauty. And if God blast a man, all
these wither away , and come to no-
thing : thou makest his *Beauty to con-*
sume away like a moth : a moth is always
I 3 fretting,

Vol. I. fretting, not apt to be found out, not
 apt to be resisted, but brings all to confusion. These Rebukes of God blast men.

IV. Take notice what is here *Inferred*:
Surely every man is vanity. And no conclusion doth more plainly follow from any thing premised. For every man is *Vanity* upon a double account.

1st, Because he is *fallible*, and so subject to miscarry; else he would never be found in the ways of iniquity, and

2dly, Because he is so controulable and *accountable*; and under a power that he cannot resist.

Thus I have given you an account in these four particulars, of the matter that lyes in the words. And really, the Text offers to you things of *great moment*, and weighty consideration. I will speak shortly to all *four*: and because I will be brief, I will put the two first together, and they will do well so, *viz.*

I. That iniquity is the Foundation of Punishment: And II. That it is regular, usual and ordinary for God to controul and punish sinners. This is expected, and it becomes him, as he is the Governour, and Maintainer of Righteousness, and Truth. And if you speak properly

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properly of Punishment, God doth only Dis. V
 chastise *Sinners* ; So, and no otherwise ;
Sinners , and none else. And then it is
 a great Note, and will teach us to speak
 more accurately, when we speak of *Pu-*
nishment : For if we speak properly, God Pæna ubi
 est ratio
 Vindictæ.
 doth not Punish but in the case of Sin.
 But because use and practise hath Am-
 plified this word, and in a more large
 sense of the word, we say a Man is Pu- Malum
 sensus.
 nished, when any evil thing befalls him,
 though he hath done nothing that may
 procure it ; I will therefore in a prepa-
 ratory way offer *four cases*, which we are
not to call punishment.

I. The effects of God's *absolute sove-*
raignty, and Power. We acknowledge,
 that God in the use of his Sovereignty,
 may deal differently with several of his
 Creatures : and yet, where he deals bet-
 ter, he doth not reward, and where he
 deals worse, he doth not punish. And
 if this were well understood, those pas-
 sages in *Rom. 9.* would be better under-
 stood : Such as these, *Jacob have I loved,*
and Esau have I hated : It imports no more
 than that it was the Pleasure of God ,
 to take the younger Brother *Jacob*, and
 make him the Progenitor of the pro-
 mised Messias, and not *Esau* : and this

Vol. I. is the meaning of that Scripture. *Hating* there, is *less loving*; and our Saviour so useth the word, *Luke 14. 26.* when he bids us *hate our own life, and hate Father and Mother*; whereas we are enjoined to honour Father and Mother; and to preserve our lives; and it is our duty; for if we may not kill another, we may not kill our selves. And this is expounded in *Matt. 10. 37, 38.* by defending our life, that is, with denying Christ, &c. So again, *hath not the Potter power over his clay, &c.* that is, he may make one, a Vessel of higher use; another, of inferiour use: and this belongs to God's undoubted Priviledge, Power and Sovereignty; To raise one to a higher condition in the World, and place another in an inferiour condition; to make one high, another low; one Rich, another Poor; one a Master, another Servant. Now we are not to say that God doth Punish him, that is in the worst condition: here is no notion of punishment: this is neither the Reward of any man's Virtue; nor the Punishment of any man's fault: for Punishment properly is where there is *Pæna ratione vindictæ*: But these things are as God pleaseth. Now this I make further

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ther appear by interpreting St. Paul by Dis. V. himself, where he speaks of *Vessels of honour, and Vessels of dishonour*, 2 Tim. 2.

30. his own words are, *In a great house there are not only Vessels of Gold and of Silver, but also some of Wood and of Earth, and some to honour, and some to dishonour.* The *Vessel to honour*, as the Cup he drinks in; the *Vessel to dishonour*, as other Utensils. Now who hath any ill design upon his necessary Utensils? So that all these differences are within the latitude of God's Sovereignty, and speak nothing either of Love or Hatred.

2. That that is Natural Evil sometimes comes from God, barely for *Trial*, and for *Exercise*: and God doth not intend Punishment at all; neither doth he look at any Provocation, nor hath Displeasure at the person: and this was plainly good *Job's* Case. For in the beginning of the first Chapter *Job* hath God's recommendation to the full, and yet the Devil hath *Job* in his power; and is only restrained as to his Life. Therefore *Job* was not *Punished*, but he was put upon the Use and Exercise and Trial of his Patience, and several other Vertues and Graces. And therefore *Job* did

Vol. I. I did well to dispute against his Friends:
 ~~~~~ For they run upon this notion, that if any man suffered Evil, it must be Punishment : And that *Job*, notwithstanding his outward appearance, was either a Hypocrite, or some way obnoxious. But he stands to it, and will maintain his Uprightness. And in the 42 Chap. there God Justifies him, Challenges his Friends, and sends them to *Job*, and he must Sacrifice for them. So that, notwithstanding *Job* suffered so much evil, he was not an Offender, nor Punished, but Exercised, And God may Tempt us, in this kind ; to try our Affections to him, and whether we will stand to him, or no.

3. There are Chastisements, or harder conditions for the *encrease* of Virtue ; the Contempt of the World, the Encrease of Modesty and Humility. We might over-value the World, and value ourselves too much, if we were not sometimes taught, that these things are not to be taken into the account of our Happiness.

Aliquod  
 malum  
 propter  
 Vicinum  
 malum.

4. There is sometimes also Evils, for an *Evil Neighbour's sake* : a very good man, at whom God takes no offence, he may suffer some evil for his Neighbour's sake.

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fake. As good *Josiah* was overborn by the Evil that was done in the days of *Manasseh*. And in this sense is to be understood that in *Ezek. 21. 3. I will cut off from thee the Righteous with the Wicked*. And here is no Punishment neither; for they that are not in the Fault, may suffer because of the unhappiness that comes upon their Neighbours. And God knows how to make up this their loss in Time, and in Eternity. In neither of these cases, is God said to Punish. Neither of these cases come within the case of the Text.

But now, these cases being taken out, I come to give you an account of the Truth of the Proposition, *That sin is the cause of punishment*, and that in five particulars.

1. Many Sins are the *Natural Causes* of the Evils that are consequent upon them: As Intemperance of certain Diseases, Distempers, and dying before Mens time. Some Men drink themselves into Fevers, and some into Dropsies. Here Sin is the *natural cause* of Evil. Men of intemperate and dissolute Lives destroy their bodily Health; dull and stupify their Reason and Understanding; and waste their Estates. It is most apparent that



Vol. I. that some Men have overthrown strong  
 ~~~~~ and healthy Constitutions; and stupified  
 quick and nimble Parts, by disorderly
 living. They might have been much
 more in both, had they been sober;
 had they not spoiled themselves by Mis-
 government. It is apparent that some
 Eccles. 7. Men that never knew the getting of a
 17. Penny, as they had not Wit to get an
 Estate, so they have not had the Pru-
 dence to enjoy, so as to keep an Estate;
 but have wasted it faster than others
 got it. Now in these cases no body can
 say that God was severe; but these Men
 were mad, and played the Fool. Let not
 us therefore ascribe that to God, that is
 properly consequent upon Mens own ex-
 cess, temerity and rashness.

Afts 12.
 23. 1

Exod. 32.
 25.

2. Some Iniquities are the *Moral causes*
 of Evil. For this there are several Instan-
 ces. *Herod* taking God's Glory to himself,
 was the Moral Cause of his dying of the
 Loufie Disease. Because he did arrogate
 and assume to himself *that* that was
 proper to God, God would not suffer him
 to go out of the World with the com-
 mon Honour of Mankind. The *Israelites*
 Calf-worship (the first Instance of Ido-
 latry we read of) or worshipping God
 by a *false Medium*, (which is Idolatry,
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whatsoever the Papists say) was the true *Moral Cause* of the slaughter of so many of them. *Senacherib* blasphemes God; and the Host are all found dead Corpses that Night. The Case of *Corah, Dathan,* and *Abiram* : God created a new thing in the World; the Earth opens her Mouth, and swallows them up alive. *Nebuchadnezzar* vaunting himself of his Majesty and his Glory, presently is made less than a Man, sinks into Melancholy, and by his own conceit, was dispossest of his Kingdom, and eat Grass with the Ox, &c. If that be the Explanation. *Ananias* and *Saphira*, lying to the Holy Ghost, are smitten dead one after another: whereas they did a brave Act, sold their Estate, and brought a Moiey: which if they had brought it as a Moiey, had been well enough. But bringing half, as if that were All, they were slain (for lying to the Holy Ghost) by the word of St. Peter's Mouth. Here is the *Moral Cause*; that is, the Matter of the Provocation, the procuring cause of Punishment.

Dis. V.

2 Kings

19. 35.

Numb. 16.

Dan. 4. 24.

Acts 5.

3. Some Evils are the proper *Remedies* of certain Sins; as Scarceness, and Famine of *fulness of Bread*, and Excess: Throwing some Men out of Place and Power,

Vol. I. Power, the Remedy to cure Oppression and Wrong-doing. The streightned condition of some Men that are lavish, prodigal and expensive: the low estate of some that are proud and conceited: this keeps them within some Measure and Bounds. This is the 3d. Case; some Evils the proper *Remedies* of certain Sins.

4. Punishments are requisite to maintain God's Honour in the World. God would be forgotten to be the Governour of the World: He would not be thought to be concerned, if he should wholly neglect to Punish, *Eccl. 8. 11. Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the hearts of the sons of men are fully set in them to do evil.* Therefore, are open sins controlled, and secret sins are punished, lest God should be denied to be the *searcher of hearts*. God might be forgotten to be the Supreme Moderator and Governour of the World, if the World should not hear of him, when there be high Exorbitances.

5. The *Variety of Things*, and *changeable Conditions*, are as requisite to maintain Vertue and Holiness among Mankind, as the Winds, which occasion Storms and Tempests, which put the

Air

Air and Sea into motion ; and so keep them from Stench and Putrefaction. In Nature, we do observe that all things are continued, and preserved in their Purity, by *Motion*. And where there is not Motion, there is Putrefaction. Now since the *World Rational* is as subject to corrupt as the *World Natural* is, therefore it is fitting the World of Mankind should be put upon Motion and Activity ; as it is requisite for the *World Natural* to be put upon motion, by the Winds fanning the Air, and putting the Sea into motion, and thereby preserving them. This I observe, a great many Scriptures impute Creatures Degeneracy to their living at ease, *Zech. 1. 15.* And *I am sore displeased with the Heathen that are at ease, &c.* Amos 6. So *Luk. 12. 19.* And *I will say to my Soul,* Jer. 48. *Soul, thou hast much Goods laid up for many Years, take thy ease, eat, drink, and be merry.* Upon this account the lesser Evils, such as are the Evils of Smart, are preventive of the greater Evils ; such as are Rancor, Malignity, and naughtiness of mind ; and this tends to preservation. And here is the account of God's Punishment ; not that he loves Punishment ; but as becoming a Governour, and maintaining Right, and for the good of his Creatures.

And

Vol. I. And thus have I given you a just Account of what is in these Words *intimated* and *supposed*, that Sin is the procuring cause of Punishment ; and that God doth regularly and usually controul and punish Sinners. A word of *Inference*.

Jam. 41. 1. It is good Service to Mankind to *restrain* Evils, and hinder them. This the Magistrate may do ; this the Preacher of Righteousness ; it is proper for him to do : *This*, the holy Liver, by his good Example, doth constantly do. The great Evils that do infect and disturb the World, they have their being and Foundation in Sin : and therefore whosoever prevents Iniquity and Sin, he doth the work of a Saviour in the World, and a Preserver. The World would be another thing, were it not for the Iniquity that prevails in it.

2. Then let us *not forsake our own Mercy*, but favour our selves ; not expose our selves to Ruin, by causeless and unprofitable commission of Sin. Here I would take up St. Peter's Counsel, and it's excellent good in this Case. *Matt. 16. 22. Be it far from thee, &c.* Do not your selves so great Harm, for that that will not profit : Do not do your selves Mischief upon so easie an account. Every thing

thing of Sin is Irrational and Unprofitable : And a Man offers Violence to himself, when he doth it ; and doth himself wrong. Therefore, favour your selves, do not do your selves wrong, upon terms so unreasonable, and so unprofitable.

3. Since iniquity doth so much prevail in the World, let *God* be *excused* from our charge of his Usurpation over his creation. Not he that brings on the harm ; but he that is the Peccant party, doth the mischief. As in War, not he that raiseth the first Army ; but he that gives the first Offence, is the cause of the War. Therefore let us not think that God doth Usurp, or Gratifie any thing in himself, when he doth Punish. No, the true and proper cause is the Delinquent party ; he that gives the first Offence.

4. When the Judgments of God are upon us in pursuit of sin, let us then do as *Joshuah* did, let us search out the provoking Cause ; to use *Daniel's* word, the *Abomination of Desolation* , that is, the abominable thing that doth provoke God to desolate. Let us remove that that is the Cause, and doth contain the Disease.

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DISCOURSE VI.

Psalm xxxix. 11.

*When thou with rebukes dost correct
Man for iniquity, thou makest his
beauty to consume away like a
moth, surely every Man is vanity.
Selah.*

I Have already spoken to what in Dis. VI.
these Words is *intimated* ; That *ini-*
quity is the procuring Cause of Punish-
ment : and also to that that is here
supposed, That *it is regular and ordinary,*
that God should give Testimony against ini-
quity ; That he should challenge Sin-
ners. Of these two I have given an
account. In the

III. Place I come to that that is *pro-*
posed in these Words, that is, *That these*

Vol. I. *Rebukes of God do blast Men, and cause them to wither. When thou with Rebukes dost correct Man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth.* This is the *main Point* of the Words, and that which I mainly thought upon, when these Words came first into my Mind. When God takes a Sinner in hand, and sets Himself to reverse what the Sinner hath unduly done; he fails and comes to nothing; he cannot bear up against God. *Thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth.* I might enlarge these Words, to take in all the Judgments of God upon a sinful World; which are as so many Testimonies of God against Iniquity: Such as are the Confusions that are made by War; such as are the Desolations that are made among Men by Famine, Plague, and Pestilence, and all other Judgments, wherein there is a common Suffering, which all Men acknowledge to be the hand of God: and in respect to these. *God is known by the Judgments he doth execute.* But, not excluding these, I shall only take notice of the Words, as to what may pass *immediately between God and the Sinner in Secret*, and are not so visible to the Eyes of the By-standers: And that

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ing the *Hebrem* Word used in the Text ~

for *Rebukes*, יָכַח and יָסַר, im-
port such Rebukes, Reproofs,
as carry with them a No-
tion, Reason, and Argument
of Conviction, and Self-
condemnation: They signifie
Corripere, *Erudire*; to Re-

Increpationes hic reales
intellige h. e. *Penas*, quæ
sunt vice *Increpationum*,
& quasi *Advocati*, seu in-
terpretes (ut *Hebrai* lo-
cuuntur) inter Deum, &
Hominem. V. *Synop.*
Crit. בְּתוֹכָהֶן

prove, and Teach by Institution, Rules,
Law, and Discipline: As *Gideon* is said
to have Taught the Men of *Succoth*,
with Briars and Thorns; together with
his remembring them of their Scorn put
upon him. That is, when thou dost
secretly call him to an account, and re-
prove him by Reason, by Arguments of
Conviction, and by Self-condemnation:
thou makest his Beauty, &c. Here is a-
nother Word considerable; the effects
and issue of these Stroaks do terminate
upon things that are *most valuable*, pre-
cious, and *desireable*; by which a Man

חָמַר
Eius desi-
derium.
Desidera-
bile eius.
Quicquid
in eo est
desidera-

doth prefer himself and esteem himself:
Such as his Health and Strength, his
Wealth, his Friends, the Use of his
Parts, his Wit and his Brain, his Rea-
bile. *Things of value and esteem.* Dan. 10. 3. *Panis desideriorum.*
Pleasant Bread, Things nearest, and dearest, most valuable, desirable
by the Persons suffering.

Vol. I. son and Understanding, his Internal Joy, mental Satisfaction, and Self-enjoyment: these come to nothing, when God Rebukes; these *consume and melt away*, as the *Word* signifies. The issue expressed by the Verb, is no sudden, violent motion, but that which we call a *Dying Life*, or a *Lingring Death*, as the Scripture elsewhere useth it; and as it is used *Joshua* 5. 1. when the Kings of the *Amorites*, and the Kings of the *Canaanites* heard that the Waters of *Jordan* were dried up before the Children of *Israel*, their Hearts *melted away*: and *Pf.* 107. 26. their *Soul melted away*, because of trouble. So when God comes to call a great Sinner to an account, and to enquire of him; he is so far from giving any account, or making any Apology, that he *melts away*, sinks under Confusion, and falls under the Charge of the Almighty. So that I would read the Words thus, *When thou with Secret Rebukes, dost charge a Person for his secret Iniquities, thou makest his beauty, the things that he values himself by, to consume away like a moth.*

God can immediately by his Influence, Fortifie and Encourage a Man's Mind;

or

תתנח
Lionescere
fecisti.
Tabelcere
fecisti.

or else throw him down into discontent and frowardness. For the Minds and Spirits of men lye open to God, as much as ought of the Creation ; and there is the most inward Relation between the Creator and the Creature ; and wherein soever a man can keep out all created power, (the World, the Devil, yea the Angels of Glory) there he cannot keep out God : For God can call to Adversity ; God can call off all other Avocations ; and then man must mind what God will have him consider. When God will, the hearts of men will serve them, and be more than themselves : and if God withdraws, they come to nothing. And indeed that that is truly and strictly mans Weal, or Woe, depends upon That, which passeth between God and a Mans Soul ; the terms that are between God and a Mans self. How contented are some men in a condition that the world doth despise ? and how much discontent in others, that live in worldly splendour ? Therefore the difference must arise from the Temper of mens minds, and the thoughts that men have of the terms that are between God and themselves. 'Tis this notion that is in Gods Answer to *Moses* Praying for

Vol. I. *his Sister Miriam* : Num. 12. 14. *If her*

Father had but spit in her face, should she not have been ashamed seven days? How much more when the Discountenancing is from the *Father of Spirits*? In speaking to this point, I shall consider two things.

First, Whereby chiefly God doth thus Blast men; how it is brought about, and whereby it comes to pass.

Secondly, In what special cases, we may fear Judgments in this sort: Hearing from God in this worst sence.

For the *First*, I shall give an account in *six* particulars.

1. These secret Rebukes may lye in Gods suffering the *Foundation of Nature to fail, and sink*; so that Men do not continue in the true use of Reason, and Understanding: Where Men wholly cease to be themselves, as to the reason of their minds; or else what remains of mens Reason, is not for themselves, but is turned against them. As in the case of *Achitophel* and *Judas*: they were so dispossessed of the true Use of the Reason of their Minds, that they do such acts against themselves, as the Animal principle keeps all creatures below us from: (For what creature was ever known to be accessory to its own Destruction?)

struction?) and which *They* would never have done, had they continued in the true Use of their Understandings. This therefore is one way, that God can Challenge the Arbitrariness of his Creatures; either by suffering the *foundation of Nature to fail*, so that men may *not* have *the true use* of their Reason and Understanding: or what they have left, they have *for their own Disadvantage*. As you often see persons of Wit and Cunning have had no better Use of their Reason and Understanding, than to Reason against all Counsels that are given them for their advantage. This is a dreadful way, and we have reason to thank God, that he doth Uphold the foundation of our Natures, and Continues us in the Use of true and solid Reason.

2. This may be brought to pass, by *Disaffecting the mind of man toward worldly contentment*, and satisfaction; so that the *Subsidia Vitæ*, the conveniences and accomodations of Life are not Relished; but prove Sapless, without Savour or Relish. The palate of the Soul is out of Taste; so as to Relish nothing. *Eccles. i. 24.* It is best freely to enjoy: but through this Judgment of God, there is

Vol. I. is no more Taste than in the white of
 ~~~~~ an Egg, *Job 6. 6.* God can throw men  
 out of the possession of those things as  
 to Self-enjoyment in them, whereof  
 they continue the Legal Owners, in *foro*  
*hominum.* For a man may *possess* several  
 things which he may call his *Own*; and  
 yet he himself *Enjoy* no contentment in  
 them, no satisfaction from them. This  
*Solomon* hath observed in his survey, in  
 Ecc. 6. 2. the Book of *Ecclesiastes*; A man that  
 hath Right and Titles, and no enjoy-  
 ment: and he Resolves, that it is best  
 for a man to take his part of all things  
 he calls his own in the world. And a  
 man is twice his own in those things he  
 calls his own, if he have the power to  
 Use and enjoy them. And he tells us  
 that *there is one alone, and there is not a*  
*second, yea, he hath neither Child nor Bro-*  
*ther, &c. Eccl. 4. 8.* and yet he pinch-  
 eth himself, and streightneth himself,  
 and never asketh himself the Question  
 for whose sake he doth it: And he con-  
 cludes that it is the Blessing of God up-  
 on a man, when he can afford himself  
 the free Use of all, that he calls his  
 own: And it is the Judgment of God  
 upon Base minds, that, though they  
 have, they have no Enjoyment; they  
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have no power to Use that which they have ; neither can gratifie themselves, nor do any good with it. They are Slaves to their own Estates ; they *have*, and they *have not*. This I reckon Gods plague upon a mans mind, That he hath no true Enjoyment of that which is his own.

Dis.VI.

3. This may be done by Gods Inhibiting, or *Suspending* the *Vertue of several creatures*, which otherwise would be very proper to give a Man Diversion, or ease, or fitting Supply. For, *nothing is any thing any longer than God will have it. That God that stopped the mouth of the Lions* that they could not feed upon *Daniel* ; that God, that could forbid the fire from burning the Three Children ; that God can make every creature a Comfort, and Instrumental for our good, when he pleaseth. The hungry *Raven* at his bidding will be a messenger to bring wholsom food to a Prophet. As God can refresh the Earth by drops from Heaven, so he can make the *Heaven over our head to be Brasse, and the Earth to be Iron* ; so that they shall not bring forth. Yea he can make the rain that falls upon a Mans ground, Powder and Dust, *Dent. 28. 24.* He can, not only give Rain,

Dan. 6.

Dan. 3.

1 King.

17. 4, 6.

Dent. 28,

23.



Vol. I. Rain, which all the Idols of the Nations cannot do, *Jer.* 14. 22. so *Job* 5. 10. But also water the Earth with the River of God, making it soft with Showers, *Pf.* 69. 9, 10. and give us fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food, and gladness, *Act.* 14. 17. We are to understand that all things whatsoever, act in the power and vertue of the Principle that God planted in them, in the first moment of the Creation. Now it is in God, that gave them several Vertues, to Inhibit and Suspend them. This is so great a Truth, that I have Testimony for it beyond all exception. It was acknowledged by a Spirit, of which we can give no Account; the Spirit that was conjured up to give *Saul* an Answer; saith this Spirit (which is supposed to be an infernal Spirit) *wherefore dost thou ask of me, seeing the Lord is departed from thee and become thine enemy.* If God Inhibit, all creatures are at a loss: if God forsake a man, he is undone to eternity: and this is acknowledged from Hell, as all suppose; for *this* Spirit saith it.

4. God may do this by *Withdrawing his Blessing* from mens Endeavours; so that they become Unprosperous, and the

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## Blasting of Men.

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Dis. VI.

the Happy issues of Providence are Inter-  
cepted. This we have experience of,  
that many times Things Politickly con-  
trived, and carried on with power, fail  
and miscarry, and come to nothing :  
and this is because God is not there.  
Other times, you have Things weakly  
Managed, and unlikely instruments, and  
yet great Success, and things fall out a-  
bove expectation : no Account to be gi-  
ven of this, but Gods Blessing and As-  
sistance. This is that which the Wise  
man hath observed, that the *Race is not  
always to the swift, nor the battel to the  
strong, &c.* but as himself observes,  
Eccl. 2. 26. *God gives to a man that is  
good in his sight ; Wisdom, and know-  
ledge, and joy : but to the sinner he giveth  
Travail, to gather and to heap up ; to  
gather by hard Labour, and much  
pains taking ; but he hath no Joy in it ;  
but he reserves it to give to the man that  
is upright in his sight.* And this is ano-  
ther way, Gods *withdrawing his Ble-  
ssings* from mens Endeavours : and can  
any one be Prosperous, when Gods curse  
is upon him ? It is the *blessing of God* Prov. 10.  
*makes rich* : If there be a cross provi- 22.  
dence, a man may endeavour, and to  
little purpose.

5. God

Vol. I.

5. God can do this by *Awakening the Guilt* of the Sinner upon his Conscience; making that to Sting and Gaul him; and then all the world is nothing. Many sinners sin themselves into Stupidity and Senselesness. Others relieve themselves by running into Company, and other Avocations: but if God do but Quicken the Guilt of Sin upon mens Consciences, they are thrown out of all Possession. Now to do this, there needs no more, but to call men to Advertency; no more but to hold men to Thoughtfulness; there needs no more from God, but to Shut men up, and Confine them, that they be not relieved by Avocations and other Employments. Where there is Malignity, and Guilt upon the *conscience*, unremoved by Repentance; there God needs no more than to hold a man to converse with himself: and it is a marvel how this man stays in his wits. A great Offender being at Ease, hath no better Settlement, and Security, than this, that he is in an Hurry, and hath not yet Leisure to Bethink himself.

Conscien-  
tia Sceleris.

6. This may be done when Men through their *own Fear, Suspicion and Jealousy*, have certain Foretastes of Gods Refusal and Displeasure. We find by

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experience, that Things are as we ima-  
 gine. Now whether this be the Truth of  
 the case, or no, (Desertion of God)  
 yet it is all one to me, if I think so.

Dis.VI.  
 Estimantibus res  
 fiunt.

Thus God may give Men up to their  
 own Melancholy conceits. There is no  
 Security to any Mans Peace or Satisfaction  
 in this Life ; or substantial Self-enjoy-  
 ment, but two ways. 1st, That he hath  
 always Retained his Innocence. The  
 2d is, that he is Restored and recovered  
 to his Innocence, by his Repentance, and  
 Gods Pardon ; in, and through the  
 blood of *Christ*. And if a Man hath  
 not one of these two, he is Unsecure,  
 and no Man knows the condition he  
 may be in, the next hour.

Primum  
 est non  
 peccasse,  
 proximum  
 est peni-  
 tuisse.

In these *Six particulars*, I have given  
 you an Account of these *secret Rebukes* of  
 God, which the sinner cannot bear up un-  
 der ; but when he feels them, if he be not  
 Upheld by the hand of God, and that he  
 be brought into Reconciliation with  
 God, upon the Terms of the Covenant  
 of Grace, he will *melt away*, and come to  
 nothing. This for the *First*, The

*Second*, Is the case wherein there is  
*imminent Danger* of such Judgments as  
 these ; and I will give you *Six cases*.

1. The



Vulnera  
mentis  
Cruciatu  
cordis.

1. The case of *Havocking conscience*, by sinning against the Light of our own proper Judgment : and in this case, a Man doth himself inward Hurt, he gives himself a wound at the heart : And the wounds of the mind are the Torture of a Mans Soul ; and *All the world will not secure that man, that is not in Reconciliation with the Reason of his own mind.* To be sensible of *this*, that a man hath contradicted his own proper Light : in this case a man doth an act of Violence upon himself ; a man cannot do himself greater Wrong than by this *voluntary consenting to known Iniquity.* And this I account the true notion of Sin, *voluntarily to consent to known Iniquity* ; and this is that which seperates between us, and our God. If a man once voluntarily consent to known sin, he parts with the truest friend (next to God) that he hath in the world, his Conscience of Right : that bosom Friend, his only Adviser and Councillor, which will keep a man company when he hath no Company else : that will give him Content, and Satisfaction in all conditions ; that will give Testimony to him, though he be Slandred, calumniated ; and though all the Mischiefs in the world fall upon him,

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him. This friend is never put away, but by that by which God is put away, viz. Voluntary consenting to known iniquity : and this puts God away, and puts away this home-friend, Conscience of Right. If a man have no Internal Guilt, know no Fault within himself, he will be Able to bear up against all the World, and he will have Satisfaction in every Condition : but if he parts with *this*, he parts with his best friend, gives God offence, and causes him to withdraw, 2 Cor. 1. 12. *Our rejoycing is this, the testimony of our Conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, we have had our conversation in the world.* This is the first case of Eminent Danger of these Judgments, these Rebukes in secret.

Dis.VI.

Tacita  
sudent  
præcordia  
culpa.  
Hic murus  
alieneus  
esto, nil  
conscire si-  
bi, nulla  
palescere  
culpa.

2. The 2d case that I represent as Dangerous, is the case of *Hypocrisie*, Dissimulation, and Falshood : and this is equal to the other. The false-hearted Hypocrite is neither True to God, nor man, but Serves himself, and his own ends of God, of the World, of Truth, of Religion : and all these he Subordinates to his own particular Ends, and purposes ; only he pretends otherwise, and to cover a bad Design he doth

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use

Vol. I. use soft words. But how Restless must this man be in his own thoughts, when he comes to consider? For can he Depend upon these, that these Persons, or Things will do him any Good at all, when he knoweth he hath Abused the persons, and Misused the things? No certainly, this man cannot *think* that either God, or Man will be true to him, and so can have no confidence in either. For whosoever is himself False, perfidious, and base, he doth not know whom he may Trust: for he doth not think there may be a Better man than himself: and being sensible of his own internal Baseness, that *he* doth not mean what he saith to others; he verily believes all Others to be as he is; and so finding himself Unable to defend himself, he must be in Fear of all the world. Therefore it is of necessity, that a Hypocrite be in no true state of Satisfaction, or Self-enjoyment.

3. The case of *Shameless Apostacy*, represented Heb. 10.26, 27, 28. *For, if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, &c.* Where the Sin is a wilful departure; and the Sinner

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ner doth *despite to the spirit of grace*; and he doth this knowingly, and considering what he doth; the Danger is, there is no Hope of Recovery, because he hath taken his Choice, and contracted Senselessness of Mind; that he is in a condition without hope. For thus will men think with themselves; when these men come to consider, they cannot but think that God should do with them, as he finds cause to do, since they have done by God, what they had a Mind to do. Certainly *they who do worst by Religion, shall fare the worst by Irreligion*. Ignorance and incapacity, on any terms whatsoever, hold no Proportion in Malignity, with this wicked Averſation from God, and the ways of Righteousness. The Apostle puts the case, 2 Pet. 2. 12. Do but consider: What do Men in such a case as this? If one of great Acquaintance and converse prove an Enemy and become Perfidious; men had rather trust a Stranger than him: for it is the maxim of the world (I confess it is not Christian) never trust a Reconciled Friend.

4. When men *take up with the world*, and *leave God out*, give themselves up to take delight and satisfaction in their



Vol. I. worldly Accommodations, and leave  
 ~~~~~ God out: *this*, though it be far short  
 in malignity, of the other three, yet *this*
 hath in it the full Spirit of Irreligion:
 and 'tis a high provocation of God; for
 it comes to this, God is little in their
 thoughts, *God is far from their Reins*.
 For is it not very fit that we have a
 lively Sense of God, of the Benefits we
 receive from him? Now for a man to
 sit down in the world, and enjoy his
 affluence and abundance, and make no
 acknowledgment of God, this is down-
 right Irreligion: and this is, *to make*
him, that is all in all to us, and better
than all; nothing at all to us, and lower
than all: and these men cannot but
 think, if ever they come to a streight,
 that this may be God's answer, what
 come you now to me for in your neces-
 sity? As it is said in *Judges 10. 14. Go*
and cry unto the God which ye have chosen.
 Relieve your selves by these things you
 take delight in: you thought not at all
 of me; you thought your selves suffi-
 ciently provided for, and wherefore
 come you now to me? go to the Idols
 you have chosen, let them deliver you
 in the time of your Tribulation. So
 here I have represented to you four de-
 sperate states. But,

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5. There is the case of Priviledge and Dis.VI.
Exemption from outward Punishment. A ~~~~~
 man that is an Evil doer, and a constant
 practicer of Sin, hath cause to fear. If
 through his *Power*, or the advantage of
 the times, he is not in fear of any ones
 stroak, undoubtedly *that man* is more in
 danger in respect of God, and these In-
 ternal Stroaks of God dispossessing him
 of what he hath. This you must know,
 that it sometimes comes to pass, that
 the All Gracious God will not, (not-
 withstanding the high Provocations of
 some irreligious persons) he will not
 Disturb the outward Peace, for such
 Reasons as these; *Sometimes* for his
 Infinite Patience, and no man knows the
 length of Gods patience; *Sometimes* he
 will forbear, for the sake of those that
 worship him. God hath special Regard
 to the Multitude of Innocent, harmless
 Creatures, such as are *persons of mean E-*
states, but harmless; and *Children*, yea
 for the *Beasts themselves*, as in the case of Jonah 4.
Nineveh. Now in such cases as these, ^{11.}
 that God will extend his Patience, be-
 yond what in reason we can imagine;
 and that he will specially gratify the
 Number of his Worshipers, and that he
 will suspend Judgments in respect of

Vol. I. Harmless people, and Children; then
 ~~~~~ in this case, great Sinners have cause to  
 fear God's dealing with them *in private*.  
 For God hath ways to deal with men in  
 private, by letting them sink down into  
 darkness of mind, &c. And therefore  
 if any man knows he is deeply obnoxious  
 to God, and yet prospers in the  
 World, he hath great cause to fear that  
 he shall hear from God, by *Secret Re-*  
*bukes*, whereby he shall *melt away and*  
*come to nothing*. The

6th, and last Case is, the case of  
*high Spiritual advantages*. Where there  
 is powerful, and effectual means; but  
 through a contracted hardness, they  
 prove altogether Inoperative, and with-  
 out effect. And *this* was the Condem-  
 nation of *Capernaum*, *Coraizin* and *Beth-*  
*saida*. But of this I shall give you a  
 further account the next opportunity.

Lu. 10. 13,  
 75.

And thus have I represented to you,  
 as the *ways* whereby these *secret Rebukes*  
 of God are brought about; so also the  
 eminent cases of *Danger*.

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## DISCOURSE VII.

*The Secret Blasting of Men.*

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PSALM xxxix. 11.

*When thou with Rebukes dost correct  
Man for Iniquity, thou makest his  
Beauty to consume away like a  
Moth, surely every Man is Vanity.  
Selah.*

WHEN I took this Scripture in Dif. VII.  
hand, I thought I had but  
little to offer to your consideration;  
and thought at once to have dis-  
patched all. But well weighing and  
considering the consequence and import  
of the matter of these Words, than  
which nothing more in all the World  
tends to the laying a solid Foundation  
of Conscience, and engaging of Men in  
respect of the secret sense of their Minds,

L 4

to



Vol. I. to stand aright in the sight of God ;  
 I therefore cannot take my hands off ,  
 and though I have offered many things,  
 yet some few more remain.

I have given you an Account why  
 I have explicated these words of  
 those things that pass *immediately*  
*between God , and the Spirit of Man* ,  
 whereof By-standers know but little :  
 They may discern the effects , see Men  
 wither , and come to nothing ; but the  
 cause (which is in secret between God  
 and them) they feel not ; they know  
 not. The last day I gave you an Account  
 how the *Hebrew* words in the text led  
 me to this notion of those Impressions  
 that God makes upon the minds of Men  
 by way of Reason and Argument, when  
 he comes to Challenge, Convince and  
 Reprove them ; the Reason of their  
 own mind fails them, they cannot Justi-  
 fie themselves, or bear up against God.  
 And therefore I read the words , *when*  
*Thou with secret Rebukes dost charge a*  
*person for his secret iniquities, thou makest*  
*his beauty , viz. his Reason, and Under-*  
*standing ; his wit and parts, those things*  
*that he Values himself by, to Consume away*  
*like a moth.*

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I have shewed in *six* Instances where-  
by this comes to pass. Dis. VII.

I have also shewed you in part the great Provocation of God to deal thus with men : to confound them in their inward parts, to beat them out of the sense of their own Reason ; and leave them Self-condemned : so that they retain no Priviledge of Self-enjoyment. And I have instanced in *six cases*, which do properly lead men into this condition.

1. The case of *Havocking Conscience*, by sinning against the sense of their own judgment.

2. The case of *Hypocrisie*, dissimulation, and falshood : when men do not honestly Mean, or really Intend.

3. The case of Shameless *Apostacy*.

4. (Which is yet inferiour to the other three, but yet Bad enough) the case of *Irreligion*, when men give God no place, are taken up with their own outward Accommodations, and have no sense of God ; when he is not, by those good things, Endear'd or Recommended to them ; this is downright Irreligion.

5. The case of *exemption from outward punishment*. As whensoever it pleaseth  
God

Vol. I. God (as sometimes it doth) to make  
 ~~~~~ use of his infinite Patience : For who  
 among us knows the length of Gods
 Patience ? and upon that consideration,
 he will Forbear the world , notwith-
 standing Prophaneness and declared A-
 theism.

Or whensoever God is pleased out of
 respect to his *worshippers*, or out of his
 compassion towards innocent Infants,
 and harmless Creatures, to keep off
 Judgments ; then is it to be thought
 that those persons that are Wilful Sin-
 ners, &c. shall hear from God *in pri-
 vate* ; to abate their Confidence, and to
 shew how exorbitant they are, in their
 ways. This God can do, by letting
 them Sink down into mental Distracti-
 on, &c. For God can Dispossess a
 man of all his Comforts, by not giving
 him power of Self-enjoyment, and ta-
 king content. For *this* of the two, is a
 far greater mercy of God , for a man to
 have Less, and a contented mind ; than
 to have much more, and not have sa-
 tisfaction. For power of Self-enjoy-
 ment is a far greater thing than Right
 and Title.

It comes to pass sometimes, that great
 Offenders do avoid the hands of men,
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either through the undue favour of Dif. VII. partial Judges, or sometimes by great Friends, or some worldly Interest, or Craft, or Cunning; or sometimes a thing is acted in secret, and cannot be legally proved (as what more ordinary than secret murders;) when it cannot at all be Proved at a distance of time, the guilty cannot be at peace, and their own mouths must betray them. In these cases, it is most likely, these persons will hear from God.

6. In the last place the case of *high Spiritual Advantages*. That was the aggravation of the Sin of *Capernaum, Coraizin* Lu. 10. 13, and *Bethsaida* that they were *Lifted up to* 15. *Heaven*; and they are Threatned, to be Matt. 11. 21, 23. *thrown down into Hell*. For if the mighty works that were done in them, had been done in *Sodom and Gomorrah*, they had repented: And this is the aggravation. And this is an Observation, You never read of a Sin that cannot be Pardoned, till you read of the extraordinary Gift of the H. Ghost. The case that is represented *Isaiah 6. 9, 10.* all desperate cases refer to. And he said, *go tell this People, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but percieve not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy,*
and

Vol. I. *and shut their eyes : Lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert and be healed.* All desperate conditions

Mat. 13.

14.

Mat. 4. 12.

Lu. 8. 10.

Joh. 12. 40.

Act. 28. 26.

Rom. 11. 8.

refer to this, every one of the four Evangelists relate that our Saviour refers cases to it : It is referred to in the Acts of the Apostles, and by St. Paul to the Romans 11. 8. Here it is in the first copy, and all after instances are after this example. When Men dally in Religion, Dissemble with God, give God high offences, Provoke and Exasperate him to displeasure, by their trifling and dallying, and hypocrisy, and dissimulation, and Irreligion, and living in sin ; then it comes to the case which is Represented in the Prophet *Isaiah*. This notion is declared, *Amos 3. 2. You only have I known of all the Families of the Earth ; therefore I will punish you for all your Iniquities.* And this best complies with the Reason of the thing, and holds the fittest Proportion ; That they who have had the greatest Opportunities and have been most wanting to themselves ; and continue in their Iniquities, and give themselves leave to sin, which are the worst of Sinners ; that Judgments should befall *them*. And it is reasonable,

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sonable, that God should recompence *Dis. VII.*
 Spiritual Sins by *Spiritual Judgments* : ~~~~~

and these are, a Reprobate state, a feared Conscience, a blinded Understanding : and that is the worst condition ; for this man is remotest from Repentance ; and Repentance is the Recovery. Or else that they be under the dreadful and fearful Apprehensions of an Illuminated and Misgiving mind , and so upon a continual Rack and Torture. Now these *Mental Judgments* they have a peculiarity to the Visible Church ; and are much more within the Compass of the visible Church, than in the wilderness of the World. Thus I have represented to you, the *Cases* : now I come to make some *Application*. I will make these Inferences.

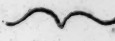
First, Hence we have an *account* of mens withering in the World, taking little or no Delight in the affairs ; though in no bad circumstances, do not enjoy *Psalm. 91. 6.* themselves. We wonder sometimes, that men cannot be content ; they want nothing, neither Friends, nor Estates, nor any other convenience of life ; men in shorter conditions by far, enjoy themselves upon much better Terms ; here is the *Account* : there are *secret Judgments*

Vol. I. *ments* of God ; Judgments that work in
 ~~~~~ darkness. There is no wonder that  
 men cannot hold up their heads, when  
 they are neither at Peace with God,  
 nor at Peace with their own Consci-  
 ences : and all these things that are  
 without a man will make no more Re-  
 compence for the Want of the peace of  
 Conscience , than it will make a Re-  
 compence for the pain of the Gout, to  
 lye upon a bed of Down. Men have  
*no Peace* , neither *with God*, because not  
 Reconciled to the Nature, Mind, nor  
 Will of God ; *nor* have they *peace in*  
*their own Consciences*, because under  
 guilt. Therefore no wonder that Friends  
 and Revenues, &c. will not Relieve  
 them ; they have an internal wound.  
 In this respect I may Truly say that  
 1 Tim. 5. Mens *sin go before them into judgment*.  
 24. I will give you some instances.

It was something in secret between  
*Cain* and his Conscience, that his  
 Countenance fell : For he had Sacrifi-  
 Gen. 4. 5, ced , as well as his Brother *Abel* : But  
 6. it was something within him. Another  
 Instance,

In *Nabal*, his heart died within him  
 1 Sam. 25. upon his Wives words only ; which is  
 37. strange ; for a Covetous miserable wretch  
 will



will most commonly endure words hard Dif. VII.  
enough : For words break no bones, but   
the Text tells us *God struck him.* V. 38.

Another Instance. God defeats the <sup>2 Sam. 17.</sup>  
Counsel of *Achitophel* : and he cannot <sup>14, 23.</sup>  
bear it, but goes and makes away him-  
self.

Again. *Judas* he had his bargain, Mat. 27.  
he had received the price of Innocent <sup>3, 4, 5.</sup>  
blood : why could not he enjoy it ?  
He might have enjoyed it for any De-  
mand of those that paid it him, for  
they would not meddle with it again.  
Had *Judas* been in the same temper of  
mind he was in before he did that ill  
act, he might have enjoyed himself as  
happily as so much money would have  
made him : but it was too hot for his  
fingers. We are not sure of taking any  
Comfort if we leave God out.

Another Instance. *Ananias* and *Sa-* <sup>Acts 5. 9.</sup>  
*phira* : they might have come off for  
noble Benefactors, and received the  
thanks of the Church, had they not  
Dissembled with Him who searcheth the  
hearts ; and had He not found them  
guilty of *lying to the H. Ghost.* *It is a* <sup>Heb. 10.</sup>  
*dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the* <sup>31.</sup>  
*Living God* : of him that can not only <sup>Matt. 10.</sup>  
<sup>28.</sup>  
kill the Body, but the Soul. And how  
doth



Vol. I. doth God *kill the Soul* which is immortal, but by Discountenancing it, and letting it fall down into Darknes.

Here are Instances of *Bad* men. But I will instance in better kind of Men, that make sad complaint when there is any thing in this kind.

The first is of *Job* : *Job* 3. 20. *Wherefore is there life to the Man that is bitter in Soul ?* and *Job* 13. 26. *Thou writest bitter things against me.* Here is a Representation from a *Good* Man of the sadness of this condition.

*Job* 6. 4.

Next the case of *David*, *Pf.* 51. 9. *Make me to hear of Joy and Gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoyce.* 11. *Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy Spirit from me.* 12. *Restore unto me the joy of thy Salvation, uphold me with thy free Spirit.* When *David* felt this case, see how he expresseth it.

*Asaph.*

Another *Good* Man, *Pf.* 77. 2. *In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord, my sore ran in the night, and ceased not, my soul refused to be comforted.* 3. *I remembered God and was troubled, I complained and my Spirit was overwhelmed.* Selah. 7. *Will the Lord cast off for ever, and will he be favourable no more.* 8. *Is his mercy clear*

## Blasting of Men.

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clean gone for ever, doth his promise fail *Dis. VII.*  
for evermore. 9. Hath God forgotten to

be gracious, hath he in anger shut up his  
tender mercy? *Selah.* See the sadness

of men in this forlorn and lost state and  
condition, when God comes to apply  
himself secretly to mens Spirit, and doth  
inwardly reprove. The like you have in

*Psal. 90. 11. Who knoweth the power of  
thine anger, even according to thy fear so  
is this wrath.* You know Fear ante-

dates Evil; and multiplies Evil: Men  
commonly fear more than there is. The

like case you have in *Isaiah 57. 16. I will  
not contend for ever, neither will I be al-*

*ways wroth, for the Spirit should fail be-*

*fore me, and the Souls which I have made.*  
This Scripture holds forth this Notion

fully to you, that I have been so long  
upon, *v. 17. For the Iniquity of his Co-*

*vetousness was I wroth, and smote him; I  
hid me, and was wroth; and he went on*

*srowardly in the way of his heart, v. 18.*  
*I have seen his ways and will heal him; I*

*will lead him also, and restore comforts  
unto him, and to his Mourners. 19. I*

*create the fruit of the Lips, peace, peace to  
him that is near, saith the Lord, and I*

*will heal him. 20. But the wicked are  
like the troubled Sea, when it cannot rest,*

M

whose

Vol. I. *whose waters cast up mire and dirt.* 21.

There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. So Deut. 32. 39. See now that I, even I am he, and there is no God with me; I kill, and I make alive, I wound and

1 Sam. 2. 6. I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand. God killeth, and God makes alive, by these internal Rebukes, by these Impressions that God makes upon the Mind in case of Offence; in case of consenting to Iniquity. These are called God's killing a Man's Soul: for no Man can bear up against God; neither can he live under the Reproofs of God. This is a true Account, that Man cannot be happy in the World, though he may call never so much of the World his own; tho' he hath Estate, Friends, Power, Authority, &c. Unless God be with him in some measure, he is not sure to have content; so true is this, that *when God with Rebukes, &c.*

But to prevent *mistakes* I here suggest two things to you, which being taken into consideration, I cannot be misunderstood in any thing that I have said.

1. This notion doth concern the *Two opposite States*; Reconciliation with God, and the contrary: If Men trifle in Religion, or if they continue Profane and

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Irreligious. None can be himself long-  
er than God is with him ; or at least  
will suffer him. Dis. VII.

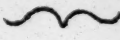
2. Which I must take in (for I must discourage nobody) you must give great Allowance for the Minds misapprehension through *mistaken Notions*, and to Persons that are under the Power of *Melancholy*. He that is *Melancholick*, believes nothing from any body ; he saith nothing right to any body ; and he is too severe in his measure of himself. And then there are some good People, who are under false Apprehensions, and under the Power of *mistaken Notions* ; and till they be rid of these, their Peace is not well secured.

This is the *First Inference*. The *Second* thing that I *infer* upon the former Discourse, is this. If Men would be true to themselves, and not depart from their own Mercy ; if Men would, in a true sense favour themselves, not do themselves that mischief, that the Devil and the World cannot do : Let them then keep within compass, let them not betray themselves ; let them *not give voluntary consent to known Evil* ; let them not become obnoxious to God ; but let Men have God greatly in regard, and



Vol. I. above all things, keep in good Terms with him, and endeavour by all means, to approve themselves to him. Undoubtedly a Man is altogether insecure, unless there be Terms of right understanding between God and him. If a man have not a conscience free from guilt, he is in danger, obnoxious to God, and is not secure against the Malignity of the world. This for certain, the security and Solidity of our Peace, is settled upon the Reality of the terms that are between God and us. But, if Men are obnoxious to God, by having knowingly consented to iniquity; for that is the *Characteristical* form of the degenerate State, that they do *voluntarily consent to known Iniquity*: If men become obnoxious to God, by giving their voluntary consents to that which their Judgments tell them is evil; if men contract guilt to their Consciences and Repent not and ask pardon in and through the blood of Christ; Then they are in fear and danger every moment: for at Gods sentence our souls Live, or dye: by his judgment, they are Absolved or Condemned. Wherefore it is fundamental to our Interest, that God be observed. It is a very lamentable case, that many  
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men have Religion to very sorry ends Dis. VII.  
 and Purposes; not for this great End   
 of settling solid Sobriety, not for the  
 laying a foundation of Right and Equi-  
 ty, not for the Determination of Good  
 and Evil, not for Rectifying of Consci-  
 ence, not for directing them in all cases  
 and particulars of life; But it is taken  
 up for a Profession in Credit; and it  
 hath no Regenerating power on Men,  
 inwardly to sanctifie them, and make  
 them Godlike: In which case, *as they*  
*have not the Effect of it, so they have not*  
*the Comfort of it*: for they are never  
 safe, never secure. Whereas, where  
 Religion is in sincerity, persons are pro-  
 vided for, as to all cases, and for all  
 times: and these persons never think of  
 God but with great complacency, and  
 Delight; and have great expectations  
 from Him; and they converse with  
 great satisfaction. Our Weal and Woe  
 depends upon our Interest with God.  
 This is the *Second* thing I infer from the  
 words.

*Thirdly*, Upon this consideration how  
 liable we are to Gods demand and Chal-  
 lenge, through failings, and Miscarri-  
 ages in our Lives, what cause have we  
 to think our selves beholden to God,

Vol. I. that we have *Encouragement to go to him*, and that we find in our selves any *disposition Godward*; any confidence in him. For we have reason to think that God may have taken Offence, and justly refuse us, and remember against us our former offences, when we make application to him: For as Guilty persons are in Danger, so are they also full of Jealousies, and suspicions and fears, &c.

Pro. 28. 1. *the wicked flee when none pursue, but the righteous is as bold as a Lyon.* So that it is the wonderful grace of God to Fortifie and Encourage our minds to come to him; and to cast our selves upon his mercy; whereas we know we have given him Offence. We find it so in our fellow Creatures; where we have given offence, we have no confidence. We are therefore as much beholden to God for this, as for any thing else in the world! Let us therefore think of our selves modestly, how short, and unworthy we are; and think of God ingenuously, and be thankful to him for his Goodness. What cause have we given to God to dispossess us of our selves, and to disaffect our minds towards worldly contentment, or to Suspend the virtue of the creatures to us,

OF



or to withdraw his Blessing from our endeavours, or to awaken the Guilt of sin upon our Consciences, or to let fall some drops of his own Wrath upon us; and yet notwithstanding all our faultiness, through his great compassion, none of these evils have befallen us: But we continue in Life, and Health, and Strength, and power of Self-enjoyment, &c. and (which is more than all the rest, and settles all the rest) confidence in God, and boldness to make application to him.

*Lastly.* What value then should we put upon the *Grace of the Gospel*, which hath declared to us a new and living way to approach to God. That for us, who have frustrated the first contrivances of wisdom, and lost the confidence of creatures; there is a *New and living way* through the grace of the Gospel, to approach to God; in which we may come to God with assurance, and confidence. It is a mighty place of Scripture, *Heb. 10. 22.* Let us draw near with a true heart in assurance of Faith, &c. The grace of the Gospel doth contain in it as well the disposition Qualifying the Subject, as Warranty for the Authorizing of the Person. So that there



Vol. I. is Remedy against all manner of exception : either the Incapacity of the person, because he is Guilty ; or the Indisposition of the party, because of Malignity : So Sovereign is the use of Repentance and Faith in the Lord Jesus.

Thus have I finished this great point : And that which hath made me so long upon this argument is because I have not found a more solid Foundation to settle and establish Conscience toward God upon than this is : since sinners become obnoxious to God, and no Power, no Privilege, no Wit, nor Cunning, no Friendship, no Worldly Interest, nor Advantage can give Defence against the strokes of God, to whose eyes all that is done lyes open. Therefore it is apparent no man's Estate hath Settlement, unless a Man be in Reconciliation with the Rule of Righteousness. If Men be inwardly Guilty, though no Man be privy, yet they are Unsafe and Insecure. If Men be obnoxious to God, if he once come to Reprove, the foundation of their confidence will sink, and all that they think to shelter themselves by, will fail and disappear, and come to nothing. Therefore it is very necessary for Men to Fear God, and have him in due Regard,  
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and be in Reconciliation with him. *Dis. VII.*

IV. The next observation is, That which is *Inferred* : Surely every Man is *Vanity*. Of which I will speak but a little, and so conclude.

Upon the consideration of the whole, the *Psalmist* doth *Infer*, Surely every Man is *Vanity*.

1. Vanity, as being so subject to be *mistaken* : So liable to miscarry.

2. Vanity as being so *unable* to bear himself up against God against whom he doth offend; when God comes to require an account, and to reprove and challenge.

But a little further, to give you an Account, though these two were enough. Vanity may be charged upon Men in a *threefold way*.

1. In a *Negative Sense*.

2. In a *Comparative Sense*, and

3. In a *Privative Sense*.

Sub rati-  
one Crea-  
turæ.

1st, In a *Negative Sense*, man is vain : Every Creature is so, because he is *short of Divine perfection*. For a Creature is Primary to nothing, he hath no absolute being; for he comes into being at God's call, continues in being by his Maintenance and Allowance; and must leave this being at his appointment. He is subject to God's pleasure, so is vain in

Vol. I. a Negative Sense ; in no moment of his life is he Independant neither for existence, nor in execution. For *in God we live and move, and have our being.*

Ast. 17.  
23.

2. Vain in a *Comparative* Sense, because he is *short of the perfection of other Beings.* Short of the Divine perfection, nothing in comparison, *Isaiah 40. 15, 16, 17. Behold the Nations are as a drop of a Bucket, and are accounted as the small dust of the ballance, behold he taketh up the Isles as a very little thing ; and Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. All Nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing and Vanity.* And then short in perfection of some of his Fellow Creatures, short of Angelical perfection. *Thou makest him a little lower than the Angels : yet it is said, God chargeth the Angels with folly,* not imputing any Moral defect to the Angels, but an Incompetition to the Divine Perfections ; and man *made lower than the Angels.* Now shortness in these two considerations is no bodies disparagement ; for this is to be a Creature : and herein any man is as good as God would have him. But I wish I could excuse mankind from Vanity in the

psal. 8. 5.

Job 4. 18.



3d Sense, That is our fault and our Dis. VII.  
 shame, for man is vain in a *Privative* <sup>Miserrimum est</sup>  
 Sense. This is that that doth Sink and <sup>fuisse fe-</sup>  
 Deface, and Deform the Glorious Work- <sup>licem.</sup>  
 manship of God in the moment of his  
 creation. And this lies in fix things.

1. A man is *divested of his Innocence*.  
 He is out of the Image of God, his  
 high Perfection, which he was invested  
 with in the moment of his Creation.  
 He has lost his proper Perfection, hath  
 lost more than the whole Creation can  
 repair.

2. By his iniquity he hath *contracted*  
*Impotency*. By giving God offence, and  
 departing from God, we have lost our  
 Innocence; and brought upon our selves  
 Dread and Terror, and Horrour of  
 conscience: for this always accompa-  
 nies Guilt. And then

3. By *unnatural Use*, *our faculties*  
*are marred and spoiled*; the Ingenuity  
 and *Modesty* of a Mans mind, and the  
 Nobleness of his Understanding, is mar-  
 red and spoiled most grievously. To  
 this a sinner miserably wrongs himself  
 by Sin. For if a man do but one act  
 that is Unnatural and Horrid, he abuses  
 the Ingenuity, Candour and Nobleness  
 of his mind for ever.

If



Vol. I. If a man once let go the fairness of his Nature, no man knows where he will stop. He is fit to do every desperate act of Sin. So that man is vain, because he hath lost his Innocence, and Deformed himself by his Sin ; he hath *marred his Principles*, and made himself unfit for many good Acts that he might have done.

Psal. 39. 6. 4. A man is Vain, by his lying apprehensions. *Man walketh in a vain shew.* A man is his own fool, flatters himself into a Fools Paradise ; Cheats, Delusions, Lyes rule in mens Lives. Man gives his consent to Impostures. Man will believe, because he would have it. Man feeds upon Lies, Fancies, Imaginations. Mens hopes and fears, confidences and refuges are laid, as lying apprehensions and conceits misguide. *Is. 28. 15.*

Facile  
credimus  
quæ Volu-  
mus.

5. By his foolish Undertakings. Man goeth rashly forth into act, neither well resolving concerning the Enenies of his action, nor duly considering his sufficiency to grapple with, and overcome difficulties.

Lu. 14. 31. The vanity of man in issuing forth to act, consists in this (1.) That Man is *Sinister* in his *Intention* : Aims not right,  
mi-

## Blasting of Men.

173

mistakes the World for God. (2.) That *Dis. VII.*  
man is *Irregular*, and inordinate in *mo-*  
*tion*; errs in choice and application of  
*Means* to his end. (3.) That Man is  
*Frustrated*, and disappointed in the is-  
sue: after all costs, curseth his labour.  
After promising expectations, expen-  
sive ways, in the close of all, has a *Pro. 13. 12.*  
shadow for the substance. Hope de-  
ferred makes his Heart sick; and the de-  
sire is not accomplished, which is a Tree  
of Life.

6. By his inward *Perturbations*, Man  
is vain. The Affections of the Soul,  
have as well changed their *Name* as their  
*Use*. A Man is always at difference, in  
Contestation with himself. *'Tis not in*  
*man a Monarchy of Reason, but a Democracy*  
*of Humours*. Man disturbs his own con-  
tent and quiet. To enjoy a Man's self,  
is the greatest good in the World: The  
serenity and sweet composure of his  
Mind, is Happiness within: Yet Men  
easily dispose themselves, and throw  
themselves into Male-content. Were all  
the World else in a Calm, yet Man will  
not be at quiet; he raiseth Storms and  
Tempests, makes foul Weather within.  
We have not our selves in our own  
hands:

Vol. I. hands: We are not Masters of our Passions, Ends, and Undertakings.

Man *Fears*, where no Fear is, and so creates himself an Enemy, by his own Fancy: He dotingly *Loves* what will return nothing for Affection: He runs out in *Hope*, where there is no ground for Expectation.

The *Uses* to be made of this are these.

1. There is no cause of *Pride*. Presumption, Pride and Conceit, are the most ungrounded things in the World. Self-denial is the most rational Act. Why should we believe a Lie? Why do we make Tools of our selves, by fond Self-flattery? Man is *Vain* in his Existence: By *Opinion* a Lyar. Things are not to conform to our Apprehensions; but our Thoughts are to answer Things. 'Tis our Misery to be deprived, but 'tis our Madness to be deceived, befooled. Otherwise we affect to know things justly as they are; why are we not willing to know our selves?

2. What cause have we to magnifie the rich Grace of God, who gave so great a Price for us so little worth. The great Physician hath dearly bought diseased Patients. God hath bought

Chaff



Chaff instead of Wheat ; *Vanity* instead of Substance. It could not be therefore his Gain by us , that did direct his Choice ; but his compassion of our Misery that procured us Mercy. Dis. VII.

What the Grace of God finds us, and how Grace leaves us, are two things of greatest consideration. From the depth of Misery to the height of Excellency. Lu. 14. 21.  
Who deals with the Blind, Halt and Diseased, but God? We may say as *Job*, Job 14. 2.  
*Dost thou open thine Eyes upon such an one?*

3. Let no Man believe himself, or lean to his own Understanding. He that trusteth in his own Heart, is a Fool. Pro. 3. 5.  
Let the Grace of God be acknowledged, Pro. 28. 26.  
both for Wisdom, and for Strength. Nothing is better grounded than that Advice of Wisdom. *In all thy ways acknowledge him.* Pro. 3. 6.  
If Egypt be a broken Reed ; Isa. 36. 6.  
which was never strong, because a Reed ; which will pierce him that leans on it, because broken : Is not he rash and unadvised that trusts, and hath confidence in such things? Isa. 28. 17.  
*Better have no Confidence, than Self-confidence :* which is as a Refuge of Lies ; an hiding place that Waters will overflow.  
And



Vol. I. And Man is never so broken, as when he  
is frustrated in his Expectation.

4. Hence we have an account of the general Madnefs that rules in the Commonwealth of Men. What can the Tranfaction be, when the Convention is made up of vain and empty Persons? The World is a very Chaos, and Confusion. So that, if Things be *tolerable* in the World, that is much more than we can groundedly expect from Men.

Whatever is of any consideration in the World is to be accounted to God, who made a *Chaos* and Confusion the Groundwork of a glorious Creation.

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## DISCOURSE VIII.

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Preached before the Honourable  
House of Commons, Feb. 4. 1673.

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J E R. vi. 8.

*Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem,  
lest my Soul depart from thee, lest  
I make thee desolate, a Land not  
inhabited.*

**T**O awaken your Apprehensions up- Disc. VIII.  
on this occasion, I shall make use  
of the Words of King *Hezekiah*, when  
he rent his Cloaths, and covered himself  
with Sackcloth, and went into the  
N House

Vol. I. House of the Lord, upon an occasion of  
 ~~~~~ *Sennacherib's* invading *Judah*, and sending  
 reviling *Rabshakeh* to insult, and
 Triumph over them: his words were,
This is a day of trouble, and of rebuke,
and of provocation. Isa. 37. 3. For our
 further advantage upon this account, I
 will adjoyn the words of the Prophet,
Joel 2. 2. A day of Darkness and of
gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick
darkness: v. 3. A fire devours before
them, and behind them a flame burneth.
 By fears and apprehensions people are
 appaled, and *all faces gather blackness,*
v. 6. This seems much to suit with
 our condition; and if so, it becomes us
 (as *Ezra* sometimes did, *Ezra 9. 13.*) to
 make a due acknowledgment to God,
 and to state things right: for *all this is*
come upon us for our evil deeds, and for
our great trespasses; for God hath punish-
ed us less than our Iniquities deserve, viz.
in the late devouring Fire, and a little
before in the Raging Pestilence, and by
several other Judgments. But now God
 hath given us a very great Deliverance,
 and we have Out-lived all these Judg-
 ments, and we have cause to say that
 God is Righteous, not in the sense that
 sometimes the word is taken, *viz.* to

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Punish condignly ; but Righteous in the sense of the Prophet, *Dan. 9. 7, 8, 9.* *O Lord, Righteousness belongeth unto Thee ;* which he explains v. 9. *To thee, O Lord, belongs Mercies and Forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Thee.* God hath been gracious, and God is Righteous ; he hath been gracious and Merciful ; for we are before God all of us in our Transgressions ; and we cannot stand before God because of them : Wherefore let us be Ingenuous, and let us Reason Gods cause with our selves, as Ezra once did with the people of Israel, *Should we again break thy Commandments, and joyn in affinity with a people of such abominations ; wouldest not thou be angry with us till thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant nor escaping,* Ezra 9. 14.

We profess, by our Assembly this day, to do what King *Hezekiah* did ; to make hearty Application to God, to humble our selves before Him, to deprecate his Offence, and displeasure, and to Represent before him the sad and deplorable condition of the Nation. And to do also what the Prophet *Joel* called the people to : *Thus saith the Lord, Turn ye even to me, with all your heart,*

Vol. I. *with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning, and rent your hearts, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God.* And also what we find the Prophet, *Jeremiah 4. 4. in the like case directing to; Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the fore-skins of your heart, lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.* Let us close with that of *Daniel 4. 27. Break off your Sins by Righteousness, and your Iniquities by acts of Mercy, if there may be a lengthning of your tranquility.* For a day of Humiliation, is a day of Repentance, in order to Reconciliation with God; and the truth of Repentance lyes in real Reformation, in Leaving off sin; in Conversion and turning to the Lord. *It is not to bow down the Head as a bull-rush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under us, Isa. 58. 5.* But as the *Ninevites* did, who though a people that were not under any Institution of God, before the Prophet *Jonah's* Denunciation against them (that we know of); yet they teach us the true Nature of a Fast; for they say, *Cry mightily unto God, and let every one turn from the evil of his ways, and from the violence that is in his hands.*

Jonah

Jonah 3. 8. So the Prophets upon all occasions do insist, and lay stress upon the indispensable necessity of Morals; by which I understand Things that are Good in themselves, Good in their own nature, and quality; that are not only recommended to us by Institution, *Isa.* 1. 16. *Wash ye, make ye clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well.* This is the Prophets direction. And he speaks undervaluingly of Sacrifices of all sorts, tho the foundation of them was divine Institution. And as the Prophet begins, so he ends, *Isa.* 66. 3, 4. *They have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations.* Wherefore what do Sacrifices in this case signifie? No more than *slaying a man, or cutting off a dogs neck, or offering of swines blood: he that burneth Incense is as if he blessed an Idol.* These things were once commanded by God, and were acceptable to him, if men were not wanting in moral duties: for there is no dispensation for Immorality, there is no dissembling with God; he will not take Sacrifice at our hands, if we be not refined in our Spirits, and reformed in our Lives. It is but to cozen our selves, to think that any thing

Vol. I. will be an Apology with God, if we
 ~~~~~ our selves do only pretend to Repent,  
 and do not Reform. *To do Justice, to  
 walk humbly before God, and to shew Mer-  
 cy, These are things beyond Thousands  
 of Rams, and ten thousands of Rivers of  
 Oyl ; more pleasing to God than if a  
 man should give his first born for his  
 Transgression, the fruit of his body for the  
 sin of his soul, Mic. 6. 6, &c.*

It shall be my business this day, from  
 this Scripture, to press not only what is  
 External, and in shew ; but what is Vi-  
 tal, Internal, Solid and Substantial in  
 the Motion of Repentance, which now  
 the Nation doth profess in this solemn  
 Application unto God. Our great and  
 loud sins, they are the Things that ex-  
 pose us to Gods displeasure, indignation  
 and wrath. And because Generals do  
 not Affect, I shall Instance in some  
 Particulars : Our Falseness and Trea-  
 chery to the true Religion, in which  
 this Nation hath prospered above a  
 Hundred Years. Our Affected Atheism,  
 and avowed Profaneness, beyond what  
 former times have had experience of :  
 Our Wantonness and Licentiousness dis-  
 graceful to Humane Nature : Our high  
 Immoralities and Debaucheries in sever-  
 ral



ral ways. These have brought the Judgments of God upon us, and turned God from us in displeasure. And none that is sober-minded can think otherwise, if he acknowledges Gods Government of the world, and doth consider that wickedness and unrighteousness are an abomination to him. For as *Moses* told the Children of *Israel*, *Numbers* 32. 23. *Our sins have found us out*: and as the widow of *Sarepta* said, *Art thou come to call my sins to remembrance?* *1 Kings* 17. 18. which words carry this Intimation, That if we hear from God in a way of Displeasure, we should suspect our selves, and find out the *Achan* that is among us. The Prophet *Micha* 6. 9. saith, *The Lords voice cryeth unto the City*; and then it follows, *Hear the Rod, and who hath appointed it.*

In the words of the Text you have these things considerable.

I. The *Caution* or Admonition. *Be Instructed.*

II. The *Ground*, and Reasons thereof. *Lest my Soul depart from thee, lest I make thee desolate, a Land not inhabited.*

I. Concerning the former, the *Caution* or Admonition, there are Three Enquiries to be made.



*First, Whereby we are to be Instructed?*  
*Secondly, Wherein we are to be instructed?*

*Thirdly, What it is to be Instructed?*  
 or the Import of the words.

*First, For the first, whereby we are to be Instructed?* I answer,

By the State of Affairs, and by the Reason of Things, or the Right of Cases.

Things themselves speak to us, *Hear the Rod, and him that hath appointed it*; and this the Prophet calls the Lords voice crying to the City, *Mic. 6. 9.* and tells us, *That the man of understanding will be instructed by it.* Cases and Things, and the State of affairs give us hints, and Intimations of what may befall us; They give notice and presages of future events; and by these offer Notions to our minds, not to be neglected: By these *Solomon's* prudent man is instructed, and he doth Foresee the evil, and shunneth it, *Pro. 22. 3.* He foreseeth the evil consequences in their antecedents. Now this is to be supposed, that God teacheth us, by the State of Affairs, or by the Reason of Things; because All things are some way or other under Gods management. Some things are appointed, ordered, and disposed by  
 God;

God ; in these He takes pleasure, He declares his will, purpose and intention : and here our subservience is required and commanded. Things not allowed, nor warranted by God, yet are permitted by Him, else they could not be ; for God could hinder them if he pleased ; but God permits them for Reasons of great Wisdom and Prudence : and doth not please by his Irresistable power, to hinder them. By these we may also be Instructed ; and we do not enough acknowledge God in the world, if we do not think that He doth interpose, where He is concerned. And wherein is he not concerned ? Since we are required, that *whatsoever we do in word or deed, to do all to the Glory of God*, 1 Cor. 10. 31. Since God makes overtures to us, and gives us Intimations of what becomes us to do, and how we ought to behave our selves in the various Occurrences of humane Life. This is a great point of Divinity, and it stands upon these foundations.

1. That God is a being of *All Perfection*, of infinitely vast Comprehension and Understanding and Power : and therefore He is Able to attain those effects, and to Teach men by All things that

Vol. I. that fall under his Government.

2. That things *managed* by divine Wisdom are intensely virtual, significative, expressive of Notions, because they do partake of the excellency and sufficiency of their cause.

3. That God doth *Nothing in vain*, nor to fewer, or lesser Purposes than the things are capable to promote, or be subservient unto. For it concerns the Wisdom of any Agent to make the best improvement of his means: for a Means is inconsiderable but as it is conducive to its end, which in it self may be Sowre, or Costly; only considerable as in respect to its end.

4. Because the affairs of Mankind are the *choice piece* of the Administration of *Providence*: And God doth in a special manner, charge himself with Teaching the mind of Man knowledge. Wherefore we may gather something directive of us, from all Gods Operations, or Permissions in the world. *In that day* (saith the Prophet, *Isa. 22. 12.*) *did the Lord of Hosts call to weeping and mourning, and to baldness, &c. viz.* by the state of things. And it is this our Saviour complains of, *Lu. 12. 56.* *Ye Hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the Sky,*  
and



*and of the Earth : but how is it that ye cannot discern this time ? Upon this account it is said, that the Goodness of God leads men to Repentance ; and therefore He complains, Rev. 2. 21. That he gave them space to Repent, but they repented not. The patience of God in not inflicting Punishment, was an Intimation to Repent. And because men were wanting herein, the Psalmist saith, Ps. 28. 5. They understood not the works of God nor the operation of his hands ; but went on to tempt the Lord, and to provoke him to anger. In this sense it is said, Job 5. 6. that Afflictions rise not out of the dust : No mans afflictions are wholly casual or contingent, but are directed by an Intelligent Agent ; of which he may make a certain Interpretation to his own advantage ; and may make the interpretation to a determined Use : For all things, some way or other, refer to God ; and as God is concerned in them, they are Instructions of Righteousness, whether God does them, or only suffers them to be done ; whether he Rewards or Punishes. As I might instance in several things. When Joseph's Brethren sold him into Egypt, in respect of Second Causes, there is one*  
ac-



Vol. I. account of it ; and in respect of the  
 First another ; *They did it for harm, but  
 God designed it for good, Gen. 45. 5.*  
 There was a very different Intention  
 in our Lord and Saviours Death, as it  
 referred to God, and as it referred to  
 the malicious *Jews* : In these 'twas an  
 expression of the greatest malice and  
 wickedness ; but God turned it to Good,  
 intending it as an *Expiatory Sacrifice* to  
 all those that Repent. *Sodom* and *Go-  
 morrah* were not barely punished for  
 their own sakes ; but for an Example  
 to all Generations that afterwards should  
 live ungodly, *Jude 7.* and *Heb. 4. 11.*  
 and *I Cor. 10. 6.* *These things are our ex-  
 amples, to the Intent that we should not  
 lust after evil things as they also lusted.*  
 I will satisfy my self with one place  
 more, and that is the Answer which  
 our Saviour returned to *John Baptist's*  
 Question, *Whether he was the Person that  
 was to come, or they were to look for ano-  
 ther ?* Our Saviour doth not answer  
 them that *John* sent, as it may be they  
 expected, by words, but by Things, Go,  
 and tell *John* what things you have seen  
 and heard, (*Luk. 7. 22.*) *how the blind  
 see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed,  
 the deaf hear, and the dead are raised.*

Our

Our Saviour would have him to understand by Things, as well as by Words; by Things done, rather than by Words spoken: and by these, *John* might understand who He was. And our Saviour upbraids those Cities where his mighty Works were done, because they believed not: and tells them that *Tyre*, and *Sydon*, yea, even *Sodom* would have Repented, if the mighty Works had been done among them, which had been done in those Cities, *Matt. II. 20.* This therefore is a certain Truth, and of great use; and shews that a Man hath something to do to know God in the World, that a Man hath Reason, whereby to make Interpretation of Occurrences that happen; For if a Man would know God in the World, he must both observe and take notice of his Providence, and what falls out in the world, and make Interpretation of what is under God's Management and Government. But because there may be great danger of making false Interpretations of Providence, I will lay down this Caution.

All such *Interpretations* of Occurrences of Providence are to be made according to the *Principles* of common *Reason*, and the plain Guidance of the Holy Scripture:

Vol. I. ture: Not particular Fancy but the plain  
 ~~~~~ guidance of the Holy Scripture: So shall  
 we be secure from rash Censure, and un-
 charitableness on the one hand; and
 from the folly of Superstition, and wild
 Enthusiasm on the other hand; which
 hath been so remarkably prejudicial to
 the World, and brought such Scandal on
 Religion.

And for this we have our Saviour's
 Example, *Luk. 13. 2.* When they came
 and ask'd him how great Sinners they
 were whose Blood *Pilate* mingled with
 their Sacrifices; he told them, that the
 import of that, and all other Occurrences
 of like Nature served for their Admo-
 nition and to instruct them that *Unless*
they did repent they should perish. But
 he rejects their uncharitable Applicati-
 on, as if they were greater Sinners than
 others. Let us therefore interpret our
 selves into our known Duty, such as
 these, to fear God greatly in his Judg-
 ments, to reverence him, to leave off to
 sin, to repent and amend our Lives:
 So shall we, as we ought, Acknowledge
 God in all his Works. And so I have
 done with that Head, *whereby* God doth
 instruct us.

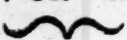
Secondly,

Secondly, *Wherein* are we to be Instructed? I answer in two things.

1. In matters of *Gods Offence*.
2. In Instances of *our own duty*.

1. In matters of *Gods Offence*. For we are highly concerned in Gods favour or displeasure. For in his Favour there is Life; and if we walk in the light of his Countenance, he will put Joy and Gladness into our hearts. *By his Favour our Mountain is made strong: But when he hideth his Face we are troubled; if he withdraw himself, we presently fall into confusion; therefore prays the Psalmist, Ps. 38. 1. Rebuke me not in thine Anger, lest thine Arrows stick fast within me.* We have many sad effects of Gods wrath all along in Scripture. *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God; for our God is a consuming Fire.* And therefore *Moses* was afraid of Gods displeasure because of the Peoples Sins, and *fell down before the Lord forty days and forty nights, neither eating Bread nor drinking Water, Deut. 9. 18.*

There is no Defence for that man who is in danger in respect of God; and the desperateness of the condition lyes further in this; that this mischief is not alone; but a wounded Conscience

Vol. I.  ence accompanies it: and this is a misery beyond all expression, to have Almighty God, whose power no one can withstand, engaged against a person, and to have our own Conscience accusing, and condemning us also; This is a state which causes Astonishment, both from without, and from within: A man then will be afraid to stay at home or to enjoy his own thoughts, because of the troublesomeness and uneasiness of his own mind. And who can interpose in this case? what can comfort, when God and Conscience doth condemn, and give Testimony against a man? These are Testimonies, against which there can be no Objection? Gods Omniscience, and our own Conscience. Upon this comes the case which the Prophet represents, *Isa. 33. 14. The Sinners in Sion are afraid, fearfulness hath surprized the Hypocrites: who among us shall dwell with devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?* Thus it is, if there be not a true Understanding between God and us, and if we have not peace within, saith the wise man, *Prov. 18. 4. A wounded spirit who can bear?* So much for the first thing, wherein we are instructed; the matters of Gods Offence.

2. In the matters of *our Duty*; that is, if we know it, to do it: if we have departed from it, to return unto it. If we have done the contrary, to revoke it which self-condemnation and humble deprecation. And if this be our case, let us be Gainers at least in this way, by our former losses; to become more sensible of our necessary dependance upon God, because of our frailty; to be more Modest and Humble, more cautious and wary, that we do not in like manner offend again. And so much for the two first, *whereby*, and *wherein* we should be instructed.

Thirdly, What it is to be instructed? Or the import of the words: and they comprehend these four gradual Acts.

1. To Search and Examine.
2. To Weigh and Consider.
3. To Understand and Discern.
4. To Do and Perform.

In the Book of the Proverbs, we have Wisdom personating a loving and tender Parent, directing and perswading his Son to receive Instruction. By Wisdom I here understand Consideration and Discretion, Advertency and weighing of Things in the Ballance of severe and

Vol. I. impartial Reason : In opposition to that
 ~~~~~ Giddiness and Folly, that betrays men  
 to vice and wickedness, and all kinds of  
 Immorality. For Folly and Inconsideration are the causes of the great depravation and Apostacy of mankind. There is nothing baser and more unbecoming Mankind, since the Beauty and Excellency of Humane Nature consists in the perfection of Reason and Understanding, than to neglect the use thereof and choose and prefer the condition of Beasts. Men are vicious, and act like Beasts, because they are Wilful, Careless, Unreasonable, Incogitant, Inadvertent ; not considering the Rules and Measures of Nature, and of Reason ; For humane Nature is indued with rational self-reflecting Faculties ; able to discern the Essential differences of Good and Evil, and to observe what things conduce to its Happiness or Misery. It is most Natural and Easy for these faculties to embrace, and pursue those Objects, which are most agreeable to them. All sober Reason is for the ways and practice of Virtue. Vice is contrary to Nature, and to a Mans Interest ; It is against the Reason of Mankind : And till a Man

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has forced himself, and miserably abused his Nature he will not consent unto it : and then we may except against that Mans Reason or Judgment, because of his practice. For the *Philosopher* hath told us, that the wickedness of a Mans Life and practise, doth vitiate and marr the very Principles of his Mind : And we must never bring a Monster as an argument against what is Natural.

Be *Instructed*, that is, capable to receive Instruction. So 'tis in the *Hebrew*. Here God *Threatens* and menaces. It is Gods intention, and expectation that his Threatnings, Castigations and Menaces should Awaken sinners to consideration, put them upon Amendment. For *when Gods Judgments are abroad in the Earth the Inhabitants of the world should learn Righteousness*. It's expected that his Afflictions should work the peaceable fruit of righteousness, to them that are exercised hereby, Heb. 12. 11. And the Prophet Amos the 4th, from the 6th to the last complains, that though they had been so and so corrected, yet they had not turned to the Lord. And the Prophet saith, *why should they be smitten any more, for they will revolt more and more*. Isa. 1. We should take it for granted, all

רנ  
Significat  
Constrin-  
gere, co-  
hibere,  
corrigere  
aliquem  
Discipli-  
na, Legi-  
bus, vincu-  
lis, pana.



Vol. I. that is from God, toward us, in this  
 ~~~~~ state ; whether it be Declarations of his  
 Will, or Denunciation of his Judg-
 ments or significations of his displeasure,
 or Castigations inflicted, or his patient
 forbearance : They are all intended by
 God as Teaching Piety, and instructions
 of Righteousness. God is not at all
 pleased with our sufferings, for what
 can sinners necessitated sufferings signify?
 Of what value is it for a Man to lye
 under those evils, which he cannot
 escape if he would ? how insignificant
 is this ? Nothing is morally Vertuous, but
 what is our choice. It is not at all
 pleasing to God, or satisfactory to him,
 to grieve the Chidren of Men. Yea,
 rather God looks upon it as a second
 evil, and himself as frustrated and dis-
 appointed in his endeavours to bring us
 to God, if we be not reformed, and
 instructed ? if we be not effectually
 amended. For *why should ye be smitten*
any more, ye will revolt more and more
Isa. 1. 5. And *I will not punish your*
Daughters when they commit Whoredoms
Hos. 4. 14. He accounts it a farther
 Offence, and a new Provocation unto
 him, when Men are insensible or con-
 tumacious. In this case Men are in dan-

ger, either of *greater Judgments*, or to be delivered up to *Reprobacy of mind*; the most desperate state. It was *Cain's* temper to Complain, and not to Repent. It is represented as the very case of the damned, *Rev. 16. 19.* That they *blasphemed God because of their Plagues, but Repented not to give Glory to him.* *Joshua's* counsel to *Achan* was that he should *confess his sin, and give glory to God, Jos. 7. 4.*

If we consider the Admonition in the Text with the Context; we shall find cause to take notice of the Mercy and Patience of God in his unwillingness to destroy, *v. 6. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, hew ye down the Trees and cast a Mount against Jerusalem, this is the City to be visited.* God had given the Enemies commission to destroy them; here is destruction as it were in Execution: But here in the Text he seems to make a stop and suspend his displeasure, and thus to Reason, *must it needs be so?* Is there no Remedy? may we not yet be Reconciled? Is it not possible to bring them to repent? Though evil be determined, tho' upon the Execution, yet if they Repent, their Ruine may be prevented. Wherefore as it is, *Amos 4. 12.*

Vol. I. *Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.* God intimates thus much, I am placable, ready to lay aside my Displeasure, we may yet be reconciled, if thou wilt Return to a right understanding. This I observe from the Relation of the verse to the former.

But now to speak shortly to the particulars, *what 'tis* to be instructed.

1. *Search and examine*, the number, weight and Measure of thine Iniquities, v. 7. *As a fountain casteth forth waters, so she casteth out her Iniquities, violence and spoil is heard in her.*

2. *Weigh and consider* how Unjustifiable, how Unreasonable are provocations on our part, while there is Patience on Gods. *Deut. 32. 6. Do ye thus requite the Lord, ye foolish people, and unwise. Num. 14. 11. How long will this people provoke me? How long will it be ere ye believe me, for all the signs that I have shewed among you?*

3. *Understand and discern*: Have fix'd and staied apprehensions in your mind. Impressions of good things slip out of our minds, if they be not considered: Therefore David prays for the People, *1 Chron. 29. 18. Keep this forever in the Imagination of the thoughts*

of the hearts of thy people. There are three Acts of belonging a Wise Man. Disc. VIII.

To have an inspection into things present.

To have respect to things past, from which comes experience.

To Provide against future events, and prepare for things to come, even for the worst. Be *Instructed*, Foresee, and Discern future Mischiefs following upon pertinacious continuance in sin: See the Issues of things in their own causes, and consequents in their antecedents.

4. *Do and perform*, as becomes an Intelligent Agent, when he is made sensible and apprehensive. *Prov. 22. 3. The prudent Man forseeth the evil and hideth himself, but the simple pass on and are punished.* Whatsoever was before was but preparatory to this, and incomplete without it, viz. *Examining, Considering and Understanding*; we must execute and perform and do accordingly, things must be secured by future Acts; things but half done, will quickly be undone; for things run back again if not settled by us into Action: We must not give over till all be finished. Things

Incom-
pletum,
Imperte-
ctum con-
vertuntur
cum Nihi-
lo. Nihil
est factum
dum restat
agendum.

Vol. I. are not put *in ultimo actu*, till there be
 a refinement of our Spirits and a Re-
 formation of our Lives : that is the End
 of all before. Things unperfected, go
 back again of their own accord. No-
 thing is sealed, till it be in its State. We
 must attain the Regenerate State, the
 Justified State ; these are the Settlements
 and Foundations of Religion. None
 more deceive themselves, than they who
 Jam. i. 27. think their Religion is true and genu-
 ine ; tho it Refines not their Spirits,
 and Reforms not their Lives. As by
 other principles, the Subjects of them
 are constituted *in habitu* ; so it is like-
 wise in this case. Humility doth not
 only *denominate*, but *Affect* ; so in *reli-
 quis virtutibus*.

Now sinners, who are called Evil-
 doers and Workers of Iniquity, they
 fail in all these duties : for they are ei-
 ther Ignorant and Inapprehensive, or
 else Careless and Incogitant ; or else
 vainly fraught and possest, or wilful and
 presumptuous.

I. *Ignorant and Unapprehensive*; Not-
 withstanding all the means they have
 to attain Knowledge and Understand-
 ing : as never having been awakened :
 and

and a Man is no body where he hath not thought and considered. For God and Nature brought us into this World with Powers and Faculties ; but Habits are acquired by consideration, and exercise, improving our Powers through God's Assistance. The want of Principles of Knowledge proves mischievous, for *without Knowledge the Heart is not good* : and God by the Prophet complains, *Hos. 4. 6. That his people perish for want of knowledge.*

2. They are *Careless and Incogitant*. This is generally true of all those that live in Sin, who are neglective of God, and defective in the right use of themselves. This the Philosopher tells us, *Every one that sinneth is ignorant* ; that is, he is either fundamentally ignorant, as having been a person of no Education, no Use and Improvement of his Natural Powers and Faculties ; or else he hath been inadvertent and regardless. And thus many live as it were *without God in the World*, forget God, not having their Senses exercised to perceive, and discern ; having no Affection nor Devotion towards Him ; have no regard to their future Glory, nor to their Souls Immortality, do Good and Bad

Πᾶς ὁ ἁμαρτανῶν ἀγνοεῖ.
Arist.

Vol. I. Bad without difference or distinction :
 ~~~~~ Confound the Sense of Good and Evil ;  
 they *think* not on the future Account,  
 nor upon Eternity. Thus did *David* ;  
 for he tells us, *Psal.* 119. 59. That *he*  
*considered his ways, and turned his feet*  
*unto Gods Testimonies.* The wicked, on  
 the contrary, are said to *forget God*,  
*Psal.* 50. 22. *Job* 8. 13. *They call not on*  
*his Name.* *Psal.* 79. 6. They live but to  
 gratifie Sense, pamper their Flesh, and  
 feed the Beast, *Rom.* 13. 14. *They make*  
*provision for the Flesh to fulfil the lusts*  
*thereof.* They make it the Business and  
 Employment of their Mind and Under-  
 standing to cater for the Body : Their  
 reasonable Souls only serve for Salt to  
 keep the Body from Stench and Putre-  
 faction.

3. *Vainly fraught*, and possess'd, so as  
 to flatter themselves, deceive their own  
 Souls, put themselves into a Fool's Para-  
 dice, live in a Lye, go on blindfold to  
 destruction. Fancy and Humour, and  
 not the Reason and Truth of things rule  
 in their Lives. Or else,

4. They are *Wilful and Desperate*,  
 casting off all Obligation to God, and  
*bold the Truth in unrighteousness* ; make  
 havock of Conscience ; *turn the Grace*  
 of

of God into Wantonness, and contract Re-  
probacy of Mind, and say with them,  
1 Cor. 15. 32. *Let us eat and drink, for  
to morrow we must die. Come, say they,  
fetch Wine, and we will fill our selves with  
strong drink, and to morrow shall be as this  
day, and much more abundant,* Isa. 56.  
12.

Thus have you had an account of the  
Caution and Admonition: be instructed.

II. Now for the *Inforcement*. *Lest my  
Soul depart from thee, lest I make thee de-  
solate, a Land not inhabited.*

*Lest my Soul depart from thee*; These  
Words are a Metaphor taken from a  
Member put out of Joynt, that cannot  
be set again; it is of the same import  
with that we read, Ezek. 23. 18. *So she  
discovered her whoredoms, and my mind  
was alienated from her*: and Heb. 10. 38.  
*my soul shall have no pleasure in him*. The  
meaning of God in all such Expressions  
is, that we should return unto him;  
therefore here observe, how hardly  
doth God forget his Relation to his  
People? how doth he inforce his Argu-  
ments? He gives Admonition; and how  
doth he inforce and back it, that they  
may take notice God's meaning is,  
they should return to him, because of  
his



Vol. I. his forwardness to admonish? In these  
 ~~~~~ Words you have a double Argument.

Meliores
 ducit A-
 mor. Plu-
 res cogit
 Timor.

*Argumentum Amoris &
 Argumentum Timoris.*

1. An Argument of *Love and good will*, lest my Soul depart from thee.
2. An Argument from *Fear, lest I make thee desolate*. A double Argument is as a double Testimony, by which every word is established, 2 Cor. 13. 1. Here is an Obligation upon Ingenuity: And the constraints of necessity. This double Argument shews us two things.

1. The *Stupidity and Sencelessness* of those, who are made to the Perfection of Reason and Understanding, and yet act contrary to it.

2. The *Impiety and Unrighteousness* of Sinners, who are a real offence to God, cause his Displeasure, and bring upon Persons and Places, Ruine and Destruction. For can any one imagine that it is a matter of nothing, that Man, who is endued with Mind and Understanding, and so made capable of God, to live in a constant Neglect of God, and Abuse of those Principles, whereby he is capable to serve God?

Since

Since all the Ways of *God* are Ways of Righteousness, Judgment and Truth, in whom there is fulness of Power and Liberty ; yet cannot by Power pervert that which is right : Is it to be endured by the Governour of the World, that a limited Creature, of bounden Duties should extend Liberty to the confounding of Order, and Right, and all difference between Good and Evil : That he should take Liberty to the introducing of all Confusion and Disorder in the Family of *God* (for the whole World is his Family) and live in the Violation of all the Laws of Righteousness, Goodness and Truth, which are the Laws of Heaven. Let us think impartially, and judge righteous Judgment.

Now because some think that Sin is a Trifle, and wonder that *God* should think himself concerned to restrain and limit his Creatures, in what they have a mind to do ; that *God* should refuse to let them enjoy that Liberty ; that *God* should deny his Creatures Satisfaction. I shall therefore shew that those things which we call *Sinful*, have an intrinsic Malignity in them ; and therefore are forbidden by *God*, because of their Naughtiness.

And

Vol. I.

And for further security to us against such Poyson, God (out of his care for us) hath super-added the Use of his *own Authority* over us, and *our Interest* (which in all reason ought to prevail with us) that we should not do our selves that Mischief ; that we should not meddle with what is so hurtful and dangerous.

This may be said concerning the Liberty, that by our Saviour we are brought into : *That in the state of the Gospel, I know nothing forbidden, which one of true Reason would desire to have Liberty to do.* There is intrinsick Rancour, Venom, and Malignity in every Sin, tho' in several degrees: And this I will shew in four Particulars.

² *Avouia*
est forma-
lis ratio
peccati.

1. Sin is a *Variation from the Law and Rule of God's Creation* : It is contrary to the order of Reason : and when I say this, I say as bad as can be spoken. Every Sin is against the order of Reason, against the Law and Rule of God's Creation : and it is unnatural to the state of a Creature. What other Creature in Nature doth vary from the state of its Creation, but Man ? who ought to be most Regular, Constant and Uniform. If the rest of the Creatures should do

do so, the World would soon be turned into a Chaos and Confusion. If the Sea should do so, it would soon overflow all its Banks. If the Sun should give no more Light, but be the cause of Stench and Putrefaction; that instead of the splendid Rays, which he casts upon the World, and revives those things by, which are below, it should send forth noisom Vapours: how would the Universe be unfurnished and disordered? The like may be said of all other Creatures, which if they should act as irregularly, and unnaturally as Man, every thing would be brought into Disorder and Confusion, and the World turned into a Chaos. What is it in Humane Nature to do contrary to the Order of Reason, and Law of Heaven? It is a Phrase Characteristical of Venom and Malignity; to which there can be no Comparison.

2. In Sin there is open and manifest *Neglect of God*, to whom all Reverence and Regard is most due. For whosoever converts himself inordinately to the Creature, averts himself from God; and then what becomes of our due Acknowledgments to God, and Thankfulness? than which nothing in the World

A Creature is found plane & plane deo subesse.

is

Vol. I. is more reasonable. *For the Oxe knoweth his Owner, and the Ass his Masters Crib,* Isa. 1. 2.

3. By Sin there is a *Disturbance in Gods Family*: (as the whole World is.) It is an interruption of that Intercourse and Communication there ought to be amongst Creatures; *for every Sinner destroys much Good*. Where-ever there is irregular Motions, Agents will interfere; and hence arise Exasperations, Contradiction and Offence. Were Mankind regular in their Motions, and confined themselves to warrantable Actions; there would be nothing of Displeasure, Passion, Provocation or Offence found among Men.

4. By the practice of Iniquity we *marr our Spirits*, spoil our Tempers, and acquire unnatural Principles, and Dispositions. By Sin, we part with the Modesty and Ingenuity of our Natures. Now therefore let the Atheistical and Profane Person be aggrieved if he can, or find fault with God, that he should cut him short, and prohibit him all irregular and exorbitant Actions: Since they are so contrary to Humane Nature, and such a Disturbance in God's Government. And since there is nothing

in Inferiour Nature, but what is Regular and constant from the first moment of its Creation, to this hour. There is Turpitude in every act of Sin; yet Sins differ: for there are several Degrees of Sin; for sins are Aggravated or Abated, by the Disposition, Capacities, and Principles of the Agent that commits them. As

1. If there be *Clear Light*, and fullness of *Liberty*: then it is sin with a high hand.

2. If sin be committed in *Doubtfulness* and *Uncertainty*, then it weakens and disables Conscience. Great regard is to be had to the Innocence, and Tendernefs of our own mind. The wise man in *Ecclesiasticus* saith, Thou hast no friend in all the world so near to thee as the Reason of thy own mind: therefore never treat the Reason of thy Mind unhand somely. Treat kindly thy home reprover; there is no friend truer to thee, nor can do thee better service; therefore hear its voice, and give it Satisfaction.

3. If Men sin through *Confusion of thoughts*, then it may be said we were not our selves. One may say we were

P

but

Vol. I. but half our selves, when we did it.

4. If we sin by *Misapprehension* or mistake ; then we did not intend *that* but *another* thing when we did it.

5. If we did it by an *Affault*, or sudden surprizal, then it was as well anothers fault as ours.

6. If upon *Provocation*, heat of Passion ; and we Revoke it as soon as we return to our selves ; by this we make it Morally void and null : For you do revoke and morally undo, that which you repent of.

7. If men sin by some *Carelesness*, Negligence, and Indiligence ; if we Re-compence it by after care, and diligence upon this costly experience : This also helps to excuse.

I conclude with Two words of Admonition to Two sorts of Persons.

First, To the *Atheistical*, and prophane, I earnestly recommend to them the Re-examining of Things : and if they do not pretend to Infallibility, I beg of them to consider their former Thoughts and Resolutions. Think again whether the Great Things of Religion may not be Realites ? *viz.* The Being of a God, the Imortality

lity of the Soul, the essential Difference of Good and Evil, and future Rewards and Punishments. At least do not Practise against the sense of these things; but Return, and use thy Reason; which if not vitiated and prepossessed, will satisfy the *Native sense* of the mind. To say nothing now of Scripture (which speaks enough of Assurance of what it declares; so that they which read it, will not easily shut their hands of it, if they intend to be wicked;) *Reason* hath so much to say for these great things, that the Obstinate are put upon it, to Blind and blot out those Reasons and Arguments, which they know not what to say to, nor how to answer; which stick as so many goads in their sides. No man, but he who is habitually evil, and hath Dethroned his Reason, and Confederated with the enemy of his mind, can satisfy himself, that there is no Reason to satisfy him to Fear these great things, viz. the Being of a God, the Immortality and Eternity of the Soul, and future Punishments. If then these things be Real, have not sinners run a wild course? I will only tell them,

Disc. VIII.

Lex nobis
cum nata,
& lex sim-
pliciter a
deo data.

1. That many, who have as madly resolved, have before their deaths found cause to alter their Judgments in these matters, and thought it their safest way to Deprecate their Offence.

2. However, they make shift to stifle the voice of Conscience at present, and go on to sin; some others, who have sometime done the like, have never had any true Enjoyment of themselves after such wounds made in their Conscience, and breach of their peace; but either fell into Confusion of thought and perplexity of mind, or Distraction, and have been sometimes their own Executioners, and have made an end of themselves: rather than endure the reproofs of their Consciences, have rid themselves out of the world.

3. Those that are of raised Intellectuals, of Refined Morals, of sober Reason, would not have upon them the Guilt of some mens sins (however they may escape Judgment in this world) for all the Titles, Powers and Revenues which such men enjoy in the world. It will only give such Reason to know, that notwithstanding
their

their own Incompetent Judgment concerning themselves, that is true even of them, which is said by *Samuel* concerning the wicked Sons of *Eli*; *They have made themselves vile*, and contemptible. So are these Profane and Atheistical persons, they are Base in the sight of God, and in the sight of wise men: for wickedness doth Disrobe any man of his Excellency, and makes him vile and contemptible.

Secondly, To persons engaged in ways of Religion. If these be Real and sincere in their profession, they are in a state of Reconciliation with God; and if in a state of Reconciliation with Him, then let them be true to the Terms of Friendship, and not do acts of Enemies in the state of Friendship. *Let them that name the name of Christ depart from iniquity. Where God speaks peace to his people, let them not return again to folly, Ps. 85. 8.* To the *Fear of God* in Scripture, is always adjoyned the *Eschuing of Evil*; and this is the Character God gives of an Upright man, *Job 1. 12.* It is essential to Religion to walk according to the difference of Good and Evil. There are other things which have the use
and

Vol. I. and confideration of the Means in Religion, which I call the Instrumental part of Religion: But Religion it self doth Issue in Holiness, Uprightness, Integrity, and Separation from Iniquity.

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DISCOURSE IX.

The Danger of Unfaithfulness to God:

HEB. iii. 12.

Take heed, Brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil Heart of Unbelief, in departing from the living God.

Religion is highly concerned in Two Disc. IX. Things; the Judgment of Truth, and the Conscience of Right: And he doth substantially fail upon account of Religion that is wanting in either of these.

I shall now consider the *Reasons* of this Caution in the Text, *Take heed, Brethren, &c.* We are highly concerned to be cautious and wary upon a four-fold account.

Q

i. From

Vol. I. 1. From those things that are *within* us.

2. From things that are *about* us.

3. From the great *Consequence* and *Importance* that Truth and Goodness hath unto our Souls.

4. From not a *Possibility* only but a *Probability* of *failing*, and miscarrying, if care be not taken; and the greatness of the Evil if we do fall short.

I. We had need to be wary because of those things that are *within* us. For if once we consent to Iniquity, and acquaint our selves with Evil, we put our selves out of an indifferency to Good and Evil, and so marr the Ingenuity and Modesty of our Natures. For one Evil Act doth beget an Indisposition to the contrary Vertue; Men become less competent to judge, or to do what is Right, when once they have miscarried. We do not know what wrong we do our selves, when we do an Act contrary to Right; for by this means we come to pass into the opposite Nature. The Apostle doth exhort Christians, *Heb. 2. 1.* *That they should take heed to the things that they had learned; lest they let them slip, and become like leaking Vessels.* Good Apprehensions do not always stay with

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with us; and contrary ones are in a Succession. This we find by Experience, that we do ebb and flow, rise and fall, go backward and forward, up and down, here and there, on and off, do and undo. Sometimes we see, and believe, understand and resolve, and then again, we grow insensible of these good Impressions that were upon us. And therefore *David* being well acquainted with the frail and uncertain Condition of Man, prays thus unto God, *Keep it* Disc. IX.
in the Imaginations of the Thoughts of the 1 Chron. 29. 18.
Heart of thy People.

Also we are inclined and solicited from our *lower and worse part*; from the Delights of our Senses, which many times prove strong Temptations to us. And lastly, we are often befooled by our own Fancies and Imaginations. *He is a wise Man who is not his own Fool.* Our Sense of our selves is more incompetent than our Judgment of others. We are so much given up to Self-flattery, that in favour of our selves, we conceit that of our selves that we do not find, and are apt to think that of our selves that nobody that knows us do believe; and all this from *within*. Nec te quæ-
siveris ex-
tra. Γνωθὲ
σεαυτὸν.

Vol. I. 2. And then from *without* us. How many things do impose upon us from our Easiness and Credulity; so that we walk as it were in a vain Shew, and this occasioned both from *Objects* and *Agents*. The Guise of the World, the Manners and Humours of Men, these are supposed to be indubitable and unquestionable: And these prove a mighty Temptation to us, when we look about us and see Men so solicitous, and over-busie, designing, undertaking, and engaging about the things of this Life; as if a Man's Happiness were altogether to be had here; and as if our present Actions had no reference to Eternity. And then *Satan*, he is a lying Spirit in the Mouths of all his false Prophets: He is an Abbettor and Encourager of Evil; being a Lyar from the beginning, and one that goeth about seeking whom he may devour. And then *Men* are deceitful and uncertain; and use their Wits and Parts to circumvent and over-reach one another. Fair Representations of things are made, when their real Existence is otherwise; so that we are many times deluded and deceived, and this is our weakness, we love to have it so; we would

1 Cor. 7.

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τα καὶ οὐκ

1 John 2.

16. *ὁτι*
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would have Men speak according to our Disc. IX.
 Sense, and not according to the Reallity
 of things. Thus it often happens,
 that they are grievous unto others,
 that do not speak according to their
 Sense. We read of *Ahab* that he ha- I King. 22.
 ted *Micaiah*, because he did not speak ^{8.}
 according to his Sense, and as he would
 have him. And So *S. Paul* saith, that Gal. 4. 16.
 he was their Enemy because he told
 them the Truth.

3. Then also the *Consequence* of Truth
 and real Vertue to our selves. For, it
 is the proper employment of our Intel-
 lectual Faculties, to be conversant about
 God ; to make enquiry after Him, and
 to find Him out in all his Ways and
 Works ; to conceive aright of Him, and
 then to resemble and imitate Him. Re-
 ligion is an Obligation upon us to God.
 The first motion of Religion is to un-
 derstand what is True of God ; and the
 second is, to express it in our Lives,
 and to copy it out in our Works : the
 former is our Wisdom, and the latter is
 our Goodness. In these two consists the
 Health and Pulchritude of our Minds :
 for Health to the Body is not more than
 Vertue is unto the Mind. A depraved,
 vitious Mind is as really the Sicknes and

Vol. I. Deformity thereof, as any foul and loathsome Disease is unto the Body. And as really as these tend to the Death and Diffolution of the Body ; so the Vices of the Mind tend to the Separation of God and the Soul. If therefore it be our care to rid our selves of Bodily Diseases ; much more it becomes us to look after the Cure of our Souls.

4. And Lastly, the *Danger* if we do not take Care ; for in this state of Probation, Exercise and Tryal, there are many Things that are matter of Temptation to us, and are intended for the exercise of our Virtue : and in the course of Providence God permits them, partly to awaken us to Diligence and Consideration ; and partly to make us to betake our selves to Him for Protection, Guidance, and Direction. And then Gain or Loss is according as we approve our selves unto Him.

This we may observe, that there are no effects in the Course of nature, but the Author of Nature hath secured them by vigorous and effectual Causes. And assure your selves, God is not more wanting to the higher Order of his Creatures : but hath taken care to secure the Intellectual World ; that part which
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is invested with Reason and Understanding, with Liberty and Freedom, and therein doth more partake of Him; and He hath secured the effects of these Agents, by exerting vigorous and effectual Causes. And what are they but the exercise of Reason and Virtue; together with Divine Assistance, Guidance and Direction? For when God made a Spirit finite and fallible; He did intend to direct, guide and govern it, by a Spirit infinite and infallible. And if any one of us find it not so; I dare say such a person hath neglected and forsaken God first, or else God would not have forsaken him. For this we take for granted, That God in the first Creation of Man, did intend to govern his Mind by the Assistance of the divine Spirit; and that there should never have been a Spirit finite and fallible; if it should not have had Relation to, and Communication from the divine Spirit.

From what hath been said I shall make two *Inferences*.

1. Then you see we may not be *Careless*, *Self-Neglective* or *Incogitant*. Some Men live so carelessly and upon such easie terms in the World; as if there were no Danger nor any thing before them

Vol. I. them to Gain or Lose : even as if they
 ~~~~~ had nothing to do, and like *Solomon's*  
*Sluggard*, their Field is overgrown with  
 Briars and Thorns. But we are greatly  
 concerned, in this state ; and there is  
 apparent hazard and danger of Miscar-  
 riage : For there is some Difficulty in  
 what is to be done, and this Difficulty  
 encreaseth the longer we neglect our  
 Duty ; and it multiplies, by how much  
 the more we have abused our selves.  
 For, *A Man hath himself as he useth him-*  
*self*. If a Man hath alienated himself  
 from God, by consenting to known Ini-  
 quity, it is the great Mercy of God, if  
 ever he be restored : and when it is done  
 it must be by Repentance and Renova-  
 tion. The first work of Religion is to  
 judge and perceive ; and this is a work  
 of Skill ; and therefore for us to be un-  
 awakened and careless, not to employ  
 our highest Faculties in this work, is ir-  
 rational and unaccountable, unworthy  
 of an intelligent Agent. In worldly Af-  
 fairs that are of any moment, we Judge  
 a Person highly culpable that doth not  
 use his Reason and Judgment. If a  
 - Man miscarry for want of this, we can  
 hardly pity a Man in so shameful a case ;  
 we hardly think him an Object of Cha-  
 rity

rity that will not work for his Living ; and do not that which in him is, to make provision for himself. For a Man that is endued with Reason and Understanding, to say, *I did not think*, I never took the matter into Consideration, is no other than the account of a Fool. Really I wonder how any Man can satisfie himself, to think that he is religious in any degree, and yet take no care to inform himself in necessary Truth : who doth not make it his Business, to set up a Throne of Judgment in his own Soul. For, if he stick here, he cannot go any farther. For if he hath any thing that he calls Religion, it is but Superstition and blind Devotion. But this, though it be what is *First* in Religion, yet it is not *All* a Man hath to do : For when a Man hath established a Throne of Judgment in his own Soul, and is able to put a Difference between Good and Evil, Right and Wrong ; then, *Secondly*, he must reform himself according to such Knowledge, and always hold himself to that, which his Judgment tells him is the Good and Right. These two things, I declare to you, are solid and substantial in Religion ; necessary and indis-

Vol. I. indispenſible, and a Man doth but be-  
 fool himſelf, to account himſelf Reli-  
 gious, if he fail in either of theſe : If  
 he fail in the Judgment of Right and  
 Wrong ; and if after his Judgment he  
 doth not anſwerably reform himſelf in  
 his Life and Actions : Such a Man's Re-  
 ligion is ſo cheap, that, as it coſts him  
 nothing, ſo it is worth nothing. A  
 Man may pick and gather *his* Religion  
 in the Wilderneſs of the World : Such  
 a Man may be born among the Hea-  
 then and conſe with Beaſts, and  
 never look after himſelf, and yet be  
 Religious upon ſuch an account. If  
 therefore you have Souls to ſave, and  
 bear true reſpect to God, be ſure you  
 take care for Right Information, and then  
 be ſure to refine and reform your Spi-  
 rits, and your Lives, according to your  
 Judgments. For, if after this, a Man  
 ſhould fail in particular Practice ; he  
 will be Self-condemned ; upon which  
 doth follow the Worm of Conſcience,  
 and that Fire which goeth not out.  
 It is a vain thing for a Man to call that  
 an action of Religion, which is not  
 an act of the Underſtanding : for that  
 is not a Religious Act, which is not  
 Humane. For we all ſay, that which  
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doth not proceed from the Judgment of the Mind, and Choice of the Will, is not an *Humane Act*, though the Act of a Man. And if it doth not arise to the degree of an *Humane Act*, I am sure it cannot be a *Religious Act*. It is therefore indispensibly necessary to Religion, that every Man, according to his Capacity, Condition, and Opportunity, take care to inform his Understanding, that so he may have the Judgment of Truth; and after this, to comply with his Judgment in Practice.

2. I infer from what hath been said, that we are not altogether to *Refer our selves to others*, but to employ our own Faculties, and improve our own Advantages and Opportunities, and to see with our own Eyes. For, otherwise we do not answer our *Make*. For without this, a Man grows to be less; and goes backward the longer he lives, and the older he grows; unless he improves his Rational Faculties, which is the proper Perfection of Intellectual Nature. We ought to look upon this *Judgment of Truth*, and Discerning, not only by way of Privilege, and as a Security against Forgery, Superstition



Vol. I. perstition and Slavery ; but also as a  
 ~~~~~ Charge and Duty. It is incumbent upon us to look after Information, in order to Reformation and Amendment: because without Knowledge the Heart cannot be good. But then the Heart is not sanctified from Knowledge alone: for there must be first Knowledge, and then Vertue. I dare assure you, no Man can be Religious by another Man's Knowledge: nor any thing of anothers: No more than a Man that is Sick, can be well by his Neighbour's Health. In matters of this nature, 'tis every body for himself. For these Perfections of the Mind, Vertue and Goodness, are not communicable, as other things are: they do not pass as Estates, and Money, and the like; but they pass by mental Illumination, by proposing each to other, and by the Receivers Consideration, and his own imbibing of that which is offered.

But here now I come to the case of *Implicit Faith*, so much applauded in the Church of *Rome*. I will tell you in few Words, the state of *Implicit Faith*. In some cases I think it may, and ought to be allowed: but in others not. As,

1. I do expresse an *Implicit Faith in* Disc. IX.
God, in those things that God hath not
revealed so plainly and fully : for in
these things, tho' the Scripture declare
them in some form of Words ; yet I
cannot reach the sense that is contained
in them. Suppose there be a place of
Scripture about some Notion, that doth
transcend the reach of Humane Reason,
and which is knowable only by Divine
Revelation ; and Divine Revelation is
comprehended in a form of Words that
I cannot fully understand ; in this case
I refer my self to God, and believe that
that is true which God intended in those
Words. This I call an *Implicit Faith in*
God.

2. There are some cases, in which
God hath revealed himself *so far, and*
no farther : Here I know no more than
God hath revealed ; and it is *learn-*
ed Ignorance to know no more than Docta Igno-
God doth say. And an *Implicit Faith* rantia.
in these two Senses, is the Resignation
of a Man's Understanding to God ; and
a great Expression of our Obedience to
him. For we should be as willing to
be ignorant where God hath not de-
clared, as we should be ready and for-
ward to know and understand all that
he

Vol. I. he hath revealed. In this Sense therefore I applaud and allow an Implicit Faith : and I think they have been busy and created a great deal of Disturbance in the Church of God that have been over Industrious to make out the Revelation of God, beyond what God hath said, or that will impose upon others, their own Sense. But such an Implicit Faith as I have declared, I do allow : for it is becoming, in respect of God ; and it doth shew us to be Modest and Teachable ; and that we do not make Religion for our selves, but receive our Religion from God.

*Necessitas
est lex im-
paris.*

*Oportet dis-
centem cre-
dere; sed
hic non de-
cet immo-
rari.*

3. Then again. Another account of Implicit Faith is this, which is virtuous and highly commendable, being the *Necessity of the case*, viz. That every one do rest in his Teacher a while. Persons that are at present without Instruction, or the Advantage of Education, must believe those that have these Advantages : As those that are without Learning, must believe Scholars for the Translation of the Bible : and this Implicit Faith is not to be blamed, but is the necessity of the Case, and cannot be avoided : For the Truth is, every Man as a *Learner* must believe, and

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and give credit to his Teacher, but yet let him not depend upon his Teacher more than needs must, nor no longer than need require : For you ought not to think that you must be in the state of a Learner all the days of your Life. A Child must believe what is told him at first, that this Letter is so called, and that two Letters put together spell so much ; but after a while, he comes to see the Reason thereof as well as his Teacher ; and will not be content always to be in the state of a Child ; but will, as he ought, use the Privilege of his Nature, and the Judgment of Discerning, and see with his own Eyes. And I must tell you, he is a very unhappy Man that hath lived twenty, thirty, or forty Years in the World, and hath never done that which is the peculiar and proper Action of Human Nature, that is, to use Reason, Understanding and Judgment ; but lived all the days of his Life, like a meer Animal, and below his kind ; having not put forth any of those Acts which do most properly belong unto him, as a Rational Being.

We condemn Credulity in the *Romish* Church, as we have good Reason

Vol. I. son to do : But I must tell you that
 ~~~~~ absolute Reference of a Man's self to  
 others, is the very self same thing in  
 the Protestant Religion ; and those Men  
 (whatever they profess) are but *Papists*  
 in it ; neither can such Persons approve  
 themselves, to be invested with Reason  
 and Understanding ; for they have not  
 put forth any of those Acts of Judg-  
 ment and distinguishing, which belong  
 to Reason ; which is the Height and  
 Excellency of Human Nature : they have  
 not acted as intelligent Agents ; but  
 have sunk down into the Animal Life.  
 I confess it is our necessity, for some  
 part of our Lives, to believe and give  
 credit ; but when we are instructed,  
 we must awaken our own Faculties ;  
 search, consider, examine, weigh and  
 resolve with our selves ; that it is so  
 upon the Evidence of Light and Reason ;  
 that the thing it self speaks. We  
 must not live and dye in this state,  
 where there is not a Judgment of discerning :  
 For in this state, both Mens  
 Minds and Consciences are defiled. How  
 unsatisfactory would it be to a Man,  
 were he not in a Spiritual Lethargy,  
 to be unaquainted with the true Principles  
 of Life ; and that he should take

this

this to be good, and that to be Evil, Disc. IX:  
only because he is told so. In all o-  
ther matters wherein Men are concern-  
ed about the things of this Life, they  
would not have Patience, to sit down  
satisfied without making due Search and  
Enquiry : but matters of Religion are of  
the greatest Importance to us ; and  
therefore , here is our special Employ-  
ment, and herein we ought to shew our  
greatest Care and Diligence. These are  
things of greatest weight, and Moment ;  
and there is nothing to be alledged to  
the contrary. And really, we do in  
Substance agree with the Papists, that  
do usurp and impose upon us ; and we  
justify their practise : They call men to  
*blind Obedience* ; and we practise it if  
we do not according to our Ability, and  
Parts, set up within us a Throne of  
Judgment, by vertue of which, we Re-  
fine our Spirits, and Reform our Lives.  
This would make a good Man ; and if  
he should happen to mistake , this would  
yet preserve him , for that which doth  
proceed from Judgment of Truth, as  
the Person doth think and suppose ;  
though there be a mistake ; the vice of  
the Mind is abated, and the Man will  
rather be pitied and compassionated,  
R than

Vol. I. than condemned. He doth act, because it is his Judgment, because he hath examined ; and finds cause so to think, after he hath heard, learnt, prayed and considered. If after all this, the Man is mistaken at last ; he is pardonable, and his Case compassionate. But if he hath a private Judgment, and hath not used due care for better Information ; he is Inexcusable : and if he be not Reformed according to his Judgment, then he is Self-condemned.

This is a point of great weight, and it lyes at the Foundation of Religion. But alas ! alas ! I lose my Labour as to the greatest part of the World. For though Liberty of Judgment be every ones Right, yet how few are there that make use of this Right ? For the use of this Right, doth depend upon Self-improvement by Meditation, Consideration, Examination, Prayer, and the like. These are things antecedent, and pre-requisite : for a Man doth not leap into a Judgment ; he is born only with Faculties, but these cannot immediately produce these acts. For it is not in the Intellectual World, as in the World Natural : for there doth the Sun no sooner appear, but there is Light from the East

East to the West : And if the Wind blow, it blows we know not how far. But in the Intellectual World, a Man is born only with Faculties, Powers, and Principles : but all Habits are acquired, and Men attain them by particular Acts. No Man is born with habits, but every Man hath himself, as he useth himself : And he that hath never considered, weighed and searched, he knows but little upon this account, Hence it is, that a great many Persons are in an Incapacity (however they may flatter themselves) concerning Acts of Judgment. For that Man's Judgment is not worth a rush, in any case whatsoever ; that hath not examined, often thought upon, and enquired into things. Men should consider, and make it their Business to be informed in the difference of things, and make due Application to God to teach their Understandings knowledge ; or else, 'tis not to be expected that they should arrive at a true and right Judgment. Therefore I do resolve it much safer of the two, for one that is Blind, or is not at leisure to weigh and consider, and so to receive Instruction, to choose a Wise and good Person to follow, and to make him his Guide ;



Vol. I. than to attempt to go alone. For he  
 was born only to a possibility, because  
 of his natural parts : but Faculties you  
 must put no confidence in, unless they  
 be qualified and seconded by Habits ;  
 and no Habits are, if not acquired ; and  
 acquisition is by mental, rational and  
 spiritual Improvement.

None so Miscarry, as the presumptuous  
 beyond their own sufficiency ; they  
 who assume to themselves where they  
 are not prepared and qualified. Such as  
 are sober, and modest, know much better  
 than others : and yet they are loath  
 to speak, fearful of being mistaken. But  
 others there are, that are Blind and  
 Unwakened ever since they came into  
 the World and yet they are confident,  
 Arrogant, Presumptuous and Self-sufficient.  
 The modest Man will not venture  
 beyond his own Strength ; he is very  
 receptive of all Direction ; glad of Information ;  
 but the presumptuous Man though Blind,  
 he is bold and confident ; because he is  
 most Ignorant. So that you see this  
 Argument of private Judgment is Modest  
 and Humble ; and grows only in God's  
 Garden. And this is the Privilege of  
 humane Nature ; yea Incumbent upon  
 us All : and we ought so  
 to

to employ our selves, that we may arrive to a perfection of Judgment; and consequently upon Judgment, to a right Frame and Temper of Mind.

Now all this I have Discoursed upon this Argument of Judgment of Truth, and Conscience of Right; which are things that have great place in Religion; and wherein if we will have any foundation for our Profession, and denominate our selves Christians, from true and solid Grounds; we must charge our selves with these things; and put our selves into a capacity of Discerning the difference of things, and form our selves according to that Judgment.

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# DISCOURSE X.

*The Malignity of Popery.*

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J A M. iii. 18.

*The Fruit of Righteousness is sown  
in Peace of them that make Peace.*

I Have propos'd to make use of these Disc. X.  
words as a Character, a *Criterion*, a Note  
or Mark of difference and distinction :  
And that not only of Persons in their  
single Capacities, but chiefly of *Churches*.  
For we find the great enquiry of Chri-  
stendom is, *which is the true Church*. The  
*Romish* they pretend that they are it :  
and they will tell us, that there is no  
other; and that there is no Salvation  
out of their *Church*. A very great Assu-  
ming, and Taking upon themselves. I  
would not run into other Arguments,  
but let us judge by this Temper recom-  
mended



Vol. I. mended in the Text, *which is likely to be the true Church.* If they do make use of the Name and Credit of Religion for inhumane and cruel Practises, then this Character doth not belong to them, Let us try by that : And,

In the first place they own it, That they may Propagate Religion with Fire and Sword. And by woful Experience it hath been found, that that which hath been done under that Title of extirpating Heretical Pravity, of which they take to themselves the Cognisance and Judgment, hath proved the most fiery and incendiary Principle that ever was in the World. Farther, They do not account themselves bound to keep Faith and Truth with Hereticks. They say, that by Heresies, Men lose all their right to Truth. Whereas we know that keeping our Word is the Foundation of all Converse. For what is one Man to another, more than his Word ? If Men be not true to their Word and Promise, by which Men are sure of Persons, and Things, all Converse is to little purpose, if not for the worse.

Farther, they *Sanctifie*, by their Notion of Religion, Treachery, Falshood and Perfidiousness, Murther, Massacre, bloody  
and

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and cruel Practises: and all this, to extirpate Heresie (as they call it) to plant Religion, and bring Men into their Church. But how this agrees with the Character given of Religion in the Text, and the intent and purpose of it, let any Man judge. Verily, by what these Men Say, and Do, one would think that Hell it self were broken loose, and come up into the World. So unlike it is to *New Jerusalem* that shall come down from above. Yet this is that Religion which they practise, and which they own in their Principles. And because I am upon a material point, I will give you a few *Instances*, by which it will appear, that what I have said is true. *Henry* the Third King of *France* was basely murdered by *Clement*. *Henry* the Fourth by *Ravillac*. And see how these Practises took among them. Pope *Pius* the Fifth that was then alive, applauded the Fact of *Clement*, and reckons it as glorious a Work as God's sending the Messiah into the World, or raising him from the dead: That a Religious Person should do such an Act, for the Interest, Service, and Advantage of the Church: Because it was done in the Defence of the Holy League, which  
was

Disc. X.

Vol. I. was indeed nothing but Rebellion and Irreligion.

*John Huss*, and *Jerom of Prague* were burnt for Hereticks, notwithstanding the *Safe Conduct* that was promised them. But they did all agree, that the Emperor could not give *Safe Conduct* to such Hereticks, and that no Faith ought to be kept with them. In this Case, we may use the Words of good old *Jacob*, Gen. 49. 6. *Simeon and Levi are Brethren, Instruments of cruelty are in their habitation. O my Soul, come not thou into their secret, unto their assembly mine honour be not thou united. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce, and their wrath, for it was cruel, &c.* In Matters of Good and Evil, Men ought to be governed by the Reason of Things, or by plain and exprefs Texts of Scripture. But these Men do teach us, as *Gideon* was said to teach the Men of *Succoth*: Judg. 8. 16. *With Thorns and Briars of the wilderness: with these he taught the men of Succoth.* Or as *Joab* did, 2 Sam. 12. 31. *He brought forth the People that were taken; and put them under Saws, and under Harrows of Iron, and under Axes of Iron, and made them pass through the Brick-Kiln, &c.* These are the Men that fulfil  
what



what is written by the Author to the *Disc. X.*  
*Hebrews*, chap. 11. of Men of their Spirit  
 and Temper, that used those Men of  
 whom the World was not worthy, after  
 this manner: *Some were stoned, others were*  
*sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain*  
*with the sword, and made to wander a-*  
*bout in Sheep-skins, and Goats-skins, be-*  
*ing destitute, afflicted, tormented.* These  
 Men of whom the World was not wor-  
 thy, had tryal of cruel mockings and  
 scourgings, yea of bonds and imprisonments.  
 All these things are verified of those,  
 that have been persecuted by the *Roman*  
*Church*: the *Albigenses* and the *Walden-*  
*ses*; of whom multitudes were mur-  
 dered for their Consciences toward  
 God.

I might also instance in their manner  
 of converting the *Indians* and Natives;  
 and tell you such lamentable Stories, that  
 would even pierce the Heart of any Man  
 to hear them. But to come near home:  
 Their Massacre of *Paris*, accompanied  
 with such Cruelty and Barbarity, as  
 Words can hardly express. Never was  
 it known in the World, that Men should  
 all on a sudden, rise up against their  
 Neighbours among whom they lived in  
 peace; and without any provocation,  
 or



Vol. I. or wrong *done* to them, to rise up and  
 ~~~~~ destroy so many thousands, upon *the*  
score of Religion and Conscience, as
 they did here, and in *Ireland*. The
 Relation of both which is extant.

But lastly, their Design all along and
 continued Practice among us, in the
 Days of *Queen Mary* and *Elizabeth*. In
 the former of whose Reign, Who is
 ignorant of the havock they made upon
 good and innocent Men, haling them
 not only to Prisons, but to the Stake,
 because they could not worship a piece
 of Bread, for God? And what they
 are now a doing God only knows;
 though in some measure their Inten-
 tions have been discovered by their
 Actions. Alas! what have these Men
 to do with our Faith in God? Is it any
 wrong to them, that we have Faith in
 God according as we find cause to be-
 lieve? Is it not enough that we do ap-
 prove our Consciences to God, and to
 receive from God what he hath spoken?
 Is all this to no purpose, unless we will
 comply with their Novel Creeds, none
 of which were known in the Days of
 the Apostles, nor for several hundreds
 of Years after? I say, what just cause of
 provocation do the Reformed Religion
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give to these Popish Spirits : That because Protestants cannot believe as the Popish Church doth, but are guided by Reason and Scripture ; the most Sacred Things in the World ; the one being the Light of God's Creation and the other the Revelation and result of his Will : Because we cannot practise contrary to these, nor otherwise than our Judgments and Consciences allow of ; therefore are we used, as they in *Daniel* by *Nebuchadnezar*, thrown into the fiery Furnace, and persecuted with Plunders, Massacres, and what the malice of these Men can invent. Is this any Religious Motion think you ? which always ought to be in obedience to God, and according to knowledge. If this be a heavy charge, I appeal to Those that know them best, whether I charge them with any thing that is not apparently True.

But let us for a while Reason with these Men, concerning these Principles, and Practises. And I ask them soberly, is *this* like the Religion of him that came to seek and to save that which was lost, and that prayed for his murderers, *Father forgive them, they know not what they do* ? And St. Stephen the first Martyr, he wrote after his copy, *Lord, lay not*

Vol. I. *not this Sin to their charge.* Is this the Religion of him who *rebuked* his Disciples for calling for Fire from Heaven, to destroy them that did not follow them? They did not think of Making a Fire to do it; but they flew to Heaven for vengeance: it must be Fire from thence, and not of their kindling. And then, what was the cause? It was for an Affront put upon our Saviour himself, which, if any thing, would have justified them. But our Saviour Rebukes them, and tells them that they knew not what Spirits they were of; and expressly declares to them, that his coming into the World was to save Mens Lives, and not to destroy them. And they which carry on our Saviour's work, and are acted by a Gospel Spirit, they do the like. Was this Spirit of Popery learnt of the Blessed Jesus, that was Meek and Lowly in Heart, and bid us Learn of him to be such? Is it not rather the Spirit and work of him, that goeth about like a roaring Lyon, Seeking whom he may devour? This indeed is like the work of him, that was a Murderer from the beginning. Is this the fruit of that Religion, that allows no Evil in any case whatsoever? that
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requires patient bearing of Wrongs, and doing Good for Evil? That if our Enemy hunger requires us to feed him, and if he thirst to give him Drink, and to win and Overcome by Gentleness, and heaping coals of fire upon our Enemy's head: And doing as God himself, who causeth his Sun to shine on the Evil and the Good, and sendeth Rain on the just and unjust; and that is kind to the unthankful and to the Evil? Are these the fruits of the Spirit, which are so famously described Gal. 5. 22. and Col 3. 12. *Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, patience, &c.* And then the Apostle chargeth us to *Forgive* one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath Forgiven us. And this was the Life of our Saviour. *He went about doing good, healing the Sick*, comforting the Disconsolate, and Instructing the Ignorant, and Reclaiming the Disobedient, and bringing them to the wisdom of the just. This was the work and business of our Blessed Saviour, all the time he lived in the World; and *this* is that which he expects from his Followers. So that I may truly say, Christianity is the best Principle of Kindness that ever came into the World: But oft it cometh to pass,

Vol. I. pass that the corruption of the best
 ~~~~~ proves the worst. And this I have observed, that where Modesty and Loving Affection, are the Natural Doury; there in the Degenerate State is the greatest Impudence and Cruelty. It hath been long observed, that Faction and mistaken Zeal, are a kind of *Wild-fire*. The more false any one is in his Religion, the more Fierce and Furious: the more mistaken, the more Imposing. The more any man's Religion is his *own*, the more he is concerned for it, but cool and indifferent enough for that which is God's.

I will give you a few *Instances* to shew you the Truth of this: That the more False any Man's Religion is, the more Furious he will be in maintaining it. *Acts* 23. 12. we read of some Men, that out of their great Zeal for the Mosaical Law, banded together and bound themselves with an Oath, That they would neither eat nor drink, till they had killed *Paul*. And *1 Kings* 18. we read of *Baal's* Priests, how that they cut themselves after their manner, with Knives and Lances, till the Blood gushed out upon them, and cryed from  
 Morning

Morning to Evening, O Baal, hear *Disc. X.*  
us, &c.

In like manner we read of the worshippers of *Diana*, *Act. 19.* that they were full of wrath and confusion, crying out, *Great is Diana of the Ephesians.* Also we read of *Balaam* the false Prophet, *Numb. 23.* how he built Altars, and offered Sacrifice from one place to another, thinking by these to bribe God; and at last built seven Altars, and prepared seven Bullocks and seven Rams, hoping by these to effect his Design. So likewise we read of those that burnt Incense to the *Queen of Heaven*, *Jer. 44. 17.* They confess this Practise of burning Incense to the Queen of Heaven, and serving other Gods, whom neither they nor their Fathers had known. And these furious *Zealots* do such things in pursuit of their Devotion, that the Reason of Mankind condemned. They made a Religion to themselves, and then did such things in pursuance of their wild and bloody Devotion, as the very Reason of Mankind startled at; as you may see *Jer. 32. 35.* *They made their Sons and their Daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech.* A thing which God commanded them not,  
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Vol. I. neither came it into his Mind. *Ezek.*  
 8. 13, 14, &c. You read of several  
 Abominations committed by the Chil-  
 dren of *Israel*, which were Represented  
 to the Prophet in the Dark. These  
 Men even spoyled the good Nature  
 they were born with, by cruel Practice;  
 and they became the worse for their  
 Religion.

I do conclude, that far better is *Nature alone*, take it as it is, than that  
 Religion, which is Insincere and False.  
 I say it again, better Nature alone,  
 though Debased, Abused, and Negle-  
 cted, the very refuse of God's Crea-  
 tion; than *that* Religion, which is  
 False and Insincere. For *Aristotle*, who  
 is credible in matters of Nature and  
 Reason, he hath observed, that man  
 by his Nature and Constitution, is a  
 Mild and Gentle Creature; fitted for  
 Converse, and delighting in it. Cer-  
 tainly were I to take an Estimate of  
 Christianity, either from Popery, or a-  
 ny of the gross Superstitions of the  
 World, and the affected modes of Persons,  
 I would return to Philosophy again,  
 and let Christianity alone. For Philo-  
 sophy so far as it goes is Sincere and  
 True, and attains good Effects: It mol-  
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lifies Mens Spirits, and rids them of all Barbarity. True indeed, it is short of Supernatural Revelation, and these things the Princes of the World did not know; as we read, 1 Cor. 2. 14. because they are Spiritually discerned, that is, (according to the Sense of the Text) they are known only by Revelation from God. For he there doth give an account, that as *no Man knows the things of a Man but the Spirit of a Man which is in him; so no Man knows the things of God, but the Spirit of God.* That is, the results of the Divine Will are not known, unless they be Revealed by the Spirit of God. This is the true meaning of this Text; and it is ill brought to prove, that a Man in the use of Reason and natural Light, cannot understand ought that belongs to his Salvation, or the Sense of any Text of Scripture. I am very confident, the Apostle never says nor means any such thing. But as the Secrets of a Man are known only to the Man himself, till he doth reveal them; so the Secrets of God are known only to God, till God reveal them; and till then we are not charged with them. For Negative Infidelity damns no Man.



Vol. I. But those that are acted by the Spirit of Popery, do corrupt the Word of God, as the Apostle says, 2 Cor. 2. 17. They make the Word of God to serve Ends and Purposes, as the Apostle saith, 2 Pet. 1. 3. They make Merchandise of the Word of God, and make Gain their Godliness. That is, they gain Power and Wealth, and live in Pomp: these are the Ingredients that make up their Religion. But since they do Usurp upon us, we will put in these few Material Exceptions against them; and will shew wherein the Popish and Reformed Church differ.

*First*, They impose upon our Belief things contrary to Reason, Self-inconsistent and Incongruous.

*Secondly*, What of Truth they acknowledge, they make Void and Elude, by Qualifications, Explications, Limitations and Distinctions.

*Thirdly*, They superad to Religion, things unlikely to be True, Dishonourable to Humane Nature, and without all warrant from God.

*Fourthly* and Lastly, They frustrate the Effects of real Religion, by their pretence of Power and Privilege.

*First*,

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*First*, They confound the Reason of our Minds, by Absurdities, Incongruities, and Imposing upon our Belief things impossible and Inconsistent. These are strange things to be said of any Religion: yet I will make it evidently to appear, and go no farther than the *monstrous* Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*, which if we do admit, we must bid farewell to all our natural Sentiments. Reason must then be laid aside, and shall be no Judge hereafter. We must then give the Lye to the Report of our Senses. And if we do this, how shall we think that God made our Faculties True? But if God did not make my Faculties True, I am absolutely Discharged from all Duty to God, and Regard to his Commands because I have no Faculty that can resolve me that this is of God. Now if I may not believe the Reason of my Mind, in conjunction with three or four of my Senses, how shall I know any thing to be this or that? And if I do not know any thing to be True or Good, I am not obliged, as to practice. And if God do require Duty of me, he useth Power against Right, and calls me to give an account, when it was not possible for me to

Vol. I. know his Mind in any thing. Therefore, I say, *Transubstantiation* doth confound the Reason of our Mind, by Absurdities, and imposing upon our Beliefs, things that are impossible, and repugnant to our Senses.

*Secondly*, They make Void, what they themselves acknowledge to be True, by Distinctions, Evasions Limitations, Glosses, Comments, Explications. And to make this out I will Instance in six things.

*1st*. Their Doctrine of *Probability*. If a Man can find any Doctor among them that held such an Opinion, it makes that Doctrine probable.

*2dly*. The Point of *Mental Reservation*. You cannot know their Minds by what they say, because you do not know what they reserve in their Minds. So that what they say may be but half what they mean.

*3dly*. The Trick of *Directing the Intention*. By this they may murder a Man, so they do not intend to murder him, but to rid themselves of an Enemy. They may declare that which is False, and deny that which is True, because they intend the Credit of their Church and Religion: and

this

this Intention shall excuse them from Disc. X.  
down-right Falshood.

4thly. The practise of *Equivocation* is too well known among them.

5thly. Their way of Evasion by having a *Double Sense*. Whereas no Man ought to use Wit or Parts, to impose upon another, or to make a Man believe that which they do not mean. In treating one with another, we ought to take care, that there be a Right Understanding between both Parties, and that each do understand one another's meaning. And in case there be a Mistake herein, we ought to release one another : for the Agreement is only in what we meant and intended ; not in that wherein they did not consent and agree.

6thly. Their Shift of Hypocritical *Prolocution*. That is, to use Words of such a Sound when they do not intend such a thing by them, as a Man would think they did. Now all these are contrary to the Simplicity, and plain Heartedness that ought to be in our Converse one with another. I will not farther explain these things because they are abominable : and I would not teach any Man to be dishonest. For they are



Vol. I. of such a Nature, that if you speak them, you teach them; and if you declare them, Men may learn them. But,

*Thirdly*, They superad things unlike to be True, and dishonourable to God. And this I will make appear in three things.

*1st.* Their use of *Images* in the Worship of God. How far better than this is that which we find among the Philosophers. God, say they, is to be worshipped by Purity of Mind; because a Spirit is best acknowledged by the Reason of Man's Understanding, and the Thought of his Heart. For this is the Worship most suitable to an Immaterial Being; and it is the Use of that in us, which is the highest and noblest of our Faculties. For the Spirit in Man is the *Candle of the Lord*, lighted by God, and a Light to direct us unto him; as we read *Act. 17. 27.*

*2dly.* The Veneration of *Reliques*. A very vain thing. For there can be no Certainty at this distance of time what they are; and if they were what they are taken for to be, what is due to them? For inanimate things are far inferiour to those that have Life: And

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we read that the less is Blessed of the greater, *Heb. 7. 7.* And *Solomon* saith, *Eccl. 9. 9.* That a living Dog is better than a dead Lyon. And, for the Living to worship things that are Dead, is altogether irrational and unaccountable. And for the worshipping of *Angels* and Fellow Creatures, which is the

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3d Thing, Why should any Man so prostitute himself as to worship these? I am sure God would not have us do so: He would not have us adore any Creature. For as the Apostle reasons, *Col. 2. 18.* It is but a shew of Humility to worship Angels, and they are in the highest Rank of Creatures. And if they are not to be worshipped (as it is plain from *Rev. 22. 9.* they are not) then surely none below them. And God hath declared, that there is but one God, and one Mediatour between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus.

*Fourthly*, They frustrate the Effect of Real Religion by their pretence to Power and Privilege. That is, they pretend to make that Lawful which is not Lawful. *Bellarmino* saith, That the Pope may declare Vertue to be Vice, and Vice Virtue. By this Practise they can turn

*Attrition*

Vol. I. *Attrition* into *Contrition*, that is, They can make such a Consternation of Mind, as fell upon *Judas*, when he went and hanged himself, by the Priests absolution to be *Contrition*; that is, change it into the notion of True Repentance. And also bodily Penance instead of an inward Change of the Mind. They pretend to work spiritual Effects by Virtue of Holy Water and the Cross. They pretend the Efficacy of Indulgences, for the Pardon of Sin: The Power of Absolving Men from Oaths and Obligations: All which are things unaccountable. There are three great Designs in Popery, and I will tell you what they are.

1<sup>st</sup>. To keep the Civil *Magistrate* in Awe.

2<sup>dly</sup>. To maintain the *Clergy* in State and Honour.

3<sup>dly</sup>. To keep the *People* in Ignorance, and so to enslave them, and disable them to see or know. These are three great things in Popery. If any of you desire any of these three things, Popery is for your Turn; but if you would maintain the Honour and Privilege of Human Nature, then you must give your Testimony against it.

But



But in true Religion there is nothing which the Reason of Mankind can challenge or object against: nothing wherein the Reason of Mankind may not have so good an account, so as to have Satisfaction.

And to declare the plain Truth. I do not at all understand that there is any Religion farther than *that* which is owned among Protestants. What they have more among the Papists is accommodated to serve Ends and Purposes. The most Learned among the Church of *Rome* acknowledge the Materials of our Religion to be true. As for the Ignorant, they are of no consideration in point of Judgment; no more than the Opinion of a blind Man in point of Colours, or of a deaf Man as to Sounds.

I conclude this with what a great *Abbot* in their Church was wont to say, That he did greatly suspect that his Religion must needs fail, because there was so little ground for it in the Word of God. I will add to what he said, That there is as little ground for it in the Principles of God's Creation, or in that which we call Natural Religion.

Now



Vol. I. Now I come to give you an account  
 ~~~~~ of the *Reformed Church*. And I will  
 say concerning it, That it doth neither
 Persecute, nor hold any Principle of
 Disturbance, but maintain Principles of
 Peace. If any Man in the Reformed
 Church do, I must declare, that it is the
 Fault of particular Parties, and not to
 be charged upon the Reformed Church.
 And to make this appear, I will begin
 with what the Church of *England* de-
 clares: and I had best for that quote
 some of the *Homilies*, of which there is
 one concerning Contention and Strife,
 and particularly that which is occasion-
 ed by Principles of Religion. The
 Words are these: "It is far better and
 "more worthy for any one to give
 "place to another, and let his Argu-
 "ment fall, than to win the *Victory* with
 "breach of *Charity*. An excellent de-
 termination, which you shall find in the
 Homily against Strife and Contention.
 Then for the *Ancients*, I will quote you
 two or three Sayings of theirs.

'Tis, saith one, Unnatural to Re-
 ligion to be forced; for a Man's Re-
 ligion must be chosen. *St. Austin* gives
 this account of the Circumcellions, the
 worst sort of *Donatists*. Saith he, "we
 "bring

" bring these before
 " the Civil Magi-
 " strate, not because
 " they err in matters
 " of Faith, but be-
 " cause they perse-
 " cute and are trou-
 " blesome to right
 " Believers. They
 brought them be-
 fore the Mrgistrate,

*Non esse petendum ab
 Imperatoribus, ut ipsam He-
 resim juberent omnino non
 esse pœnam constituendo eis
 qui in illa esse voluissent :
 sed hoc potius constituerunt,
 ut eorum furiosas violentias
 non paterentur qui verita-
 tem Catholicam vel præ-
 dicarent loquendo, vel le-
 gerent constituendo. Aug.
 Ep. 50. E. vid. & Ep. 68,
 159.*

to restrain their violence ; not to com-
 pel them to believe. Thus St. *Austin*.
 And indeed there needs nothing to pro-
 mote Religion, but gentle and friend-
 ly ways. For in point of *Natural Re-*
ligion (which takes in Sobriety, Righte-
 ousness, and Piety) you may easily sa-
 tisfie any Man by Reason. For no
 Man is in any thing more certain, than
 that he ought to be Sober and Tempe-
 rate ; than that he ought to deal Righte-
 ously, and so as he would be dealt by ;
 and that he ought to carry himself equal-
 ly and fairly ; and that he ought to
 Fear and Reverence the Deity : for these
 are the dictates of Natural Light. And
 therefore if we will *shew our selves* to
 be *Men*, we must Live in the practice of
 these Principles and comply with them.

And

Vol. I. And then for other Matters, Matters of
 ~~~~~ *Revealed Religion* and Truth ; in these,  
 we are persuaded by the Word of God ;  
 by the Reason of the Things themselves  
 in matters of the former sort ; and by  
 the Revelation of God's Word, in the  
 latter. And if the Spirit of God doth not  
 satisfy, and persuade the Mind of Man  
 to receive and entertain these, as they  
 are here declared ; then there is no  
 possibility of making this Man to be-  
 come a *Christian*. For you cannot force  
 Christianity ; because it is matter of  
 Supernatural Revelation : here you can-  
 not convince Men by Reason, which is  
 the only way to deal with Men in other  
 matters. And so the Apostle hath told  
 us : because these are the Results of God's  
 Will, therefore it follows that they are  
 only knowable by God's Revelation of  
 them to us, 1 Cor. 2. 11. *As no man knows  
 the things of a man but the spirit of a man  
 which is in him, so no man knows the things  
 of God but the spirit of God*, and he to  
 whom the Spirit will reveal them.

Now I will give you an Account of  
 the main Principles of the *Reformed Re-  
 ligion* ; what it doth Maintain, Allow,  
 Defend and Practice : And lay it out in  
 Eight Particulars.

i. The



1. The Reformed Religion doth allow and maintain the Worship of God, and all the Offices in Religion, to be performed in the *Vulgar Tongue*: So that Knowledge and Devotion may be had and promoted.

2. The Reformed Religion doth own the *Free Use of Scripture*, both in Publick and Private; and call upon Men to do as our Saviour adviseth; *viz. To search the Scriptures*, for by them we hope to find Eternal Life. For these are they which make the Man of God perfect, and richly furnish him for every good Work; and by these we are able to render a Reason of the Hope that is in us.

3. The Reformed Church doth hold that the Scripture is the *only Rule of Faith*: And therefore Traditions, Counsels and Fathers, and the Writings of Learned Men, are only to be used as Helps, better to understand the Scripture: But they are *not* to be look'd upon as any Rule of Faith; but in this case we say, as the Apostle, *If I, or an Angel from Heaven preach any other Doctrine than that which we have delivered unto you, let him be Accursed*. It is well resolved by St. Austin, who saith,  
if



Vol. I. if any one of us offer that which is not  
 ~~~~~ in Scripture, any Man that hears, hath  
 more Authority to Refuse, than the o-
 ther hath to Declare. But in Popery we
 find *Twelve New Articles* at once imposed
 upon us.

4. We of the Protestant Religion do
 assert, that every one hath the Right
 of his *Private Judgment*. But we do
 advise, that to the end Men may be a-
 ble to distinguish between Good and
 Evil, Truth and Falshood ; they make
 themselves capable of this Right by
 Prayer and Meditation ; and diligent
 Search, and Conference, and other
 Helps of Knowledge. Advising Men
 to be Modest, Humble, Sober and Tem-
 perate : And to lay aside all Fondness
 and Partiality of serving Ends, when
 they come to read the Scripture : Saying,
 as *Austin* once did, When you take up
 the Bible to read, you must not seek
 there for an Argument to confirm your
 Opinion, but resolve to entertain that
 Opinion which the Text doth direct and
 warrant. Now the *Romanists* tell us
 of what great Acquisition they have
 made, how many they have brought
 to their Church, by their way of Force
 and Violence ; and particularly they
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brag of what they have done in the *Indies*. For which I shall quote you the Testimony of a great *Abbot*, that was then a Bishop among them: his Words are these, "Who after a brutish manner drive People to *Baptism*, "as Men drive Beasts to watering, "and Butcher far more than they "Baptise.

5. We do declare, That the Teachers of the Church ought *not* to be Dictators, or Masters of Mens Faith; but Helpers of Mens Faith; for they are *not to make Religion, but to shew it*. They do not take away the Key of Knowledge from the People, as our Saviour chargeth the *Pharisees*, *Luke 11. 22.* Or as *S. Austin* saith, they do not command Faith in Men, upon peril of Damnation, to shew their Superiority, or to practice as Governours: but they do appear in the good Office of Direction, and giving Men Counsel. 'Tis not Pride of Ruling and shewing Power, but out of Compassion to lead People into the Way of Truth, and to recover them out of Error and Mistake.

6. We tell People that the *Scripture* is clear, and full, and *perspicuous* in all things necessary, as to all matters of Life

T

and

Vol. I. and Practice. So that if People be well minded, and use Diligence, they may easily understand, and be satisfied. We never teach them to resign up themselves to Others, nor to believe as others do blindfold, to believe as the Church believes. 'Tis true, to give you a little Account of this, there are in the *Bible* things of a very different Nature.

There are Matters of *Antient Records*, the History of former Times; and these things were far better known then, than they are now, at this distance of time.

There are in the Scripture things that are wholly expired, and *out of date*, and so of less use to us, as the whole Mosai- cal Dispensation.

There are in Scripture Matters of *Prophesie*, fitted for those times; which they did far better understand, than we do now: and wherein they were far more concerned than we are. For they are Transactions partly of things performed, which when fulfilled were best understood.

And there are Matters of deep *Philosophy*, as also Matters of *Philology*; and these do not belong to the Business of Religion.

And

And Lastly, There is the *Moral Part* ^{Disc. X.}
of Religion, and our Saviour's Doctrine;
and in these two our Religion consists:
and these are easily learnt and understood.
I say, the Moral Part of Religion, and the
Doctrine of our Saviour, which are ea-
sie to be understood. And for the other
Parts of Scripture, they are not of such
concern to the Community of Mankind.
And if we do not fully understand them,
we are safe enough; if so be we are
brought to real Goodness and Vertue,
and to believe in God through Jesus
Christ.

7. The Reformed Church doth not
deceive Men by any ways of *Fraud* and
Falshood. Those of the *Romish* Church,
that hold the Doctrine of *Implicit Faith*,
and the Doctrine of Merit, and teach
that *Masses* ought to be said to relieve
Souls in *Purgatory*: These Impostors
and Cheats we put upon none. Indeed
we do allow Implicit Faith in God,
where we cannot certainly understand
what his meaning is, in any particular
Text. That is, we do believe that what
the Divine Spirit meant by these Words
is true; and when it doth appear unto
us, we will receive and admit it. And
this Faith we allow.

Vol. I. But an Implicit Faith in Men, or in the *Church*, this is *Popery*. We deal honestly with Men, for we plainly declare to Men, that without personal Holiness they cannot see the Face of God: according as the Apostle saith, *Heb. 12. 14. and Eph. 4. 24. That we must be renewed in the Spirit of our Minds.* This we declare and inculcate, and admonish Men about the Effects of Regeneration, and the Motion of true Godly Repentance, and turning from Sin to God. As also put Men in mind, upon all occasions, that this is a Probation State, and that Men are here to be fitted and qualified for the State of Glory and Immortality. And that Men ought to lead Christian Lives, and not refer themselves to a Death-bed Repentance, which is very hazardous and uncertain: For how can Men get Knowledge all in a Moment? Is the time of Sicknes a time for Men to learn? When Men should come to Practise, is that a time to be Taught? when Men are put upon the very last nick of acting. Or to get themselves released from long and naughty Habits all on a sudden; and the Faculties released from such Inclinations; when as the Prophet tells us,

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us, that it is next to washing the Black-moor white, for Men that have been accustomed to do Evil, to do well. So that we deal honestly and uprightly with Men, telling them, as they expect to be Happy hereafter, in this State to acquaint themselves with necessary Knowledge, and to get themselves discharged from all naughty Habits, which will not be easie to do upon a Sick-bed; especially if Men have long abused themselves, through ill Use, Custom, and Practice.

8. We do resolve, that all they who do agree in the main Points of Religion, may look upon themselves as Members of the same Church, notwithstanding any different Apprehensions in other Matters. And this is a Principle of Peace and Charity; and this Knowledge tends to the Reconciliation of Men, and to make them live together like Christians, in Love and good Will. And for this I will quote you the Saying of the Apostle, *Phil. 3. 15. Let us therefore as many as be perfect, be thus minded; and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.*

I will Conclude all with that Saying of a great Schoolman, who spake indifferently

Vol. I. ferently of the State of the Reformed
 and *Romish* Church. “ For Men to dif-
 “ fer about Matters of particular Persua-
 “ sion and Opinion, it is not inconsist-
 “ ent with that imperfect State which
 “ we are in, while in the way to Hea-
 “ ven ; when we come thither, we shall
 “ be consummated, and more fully har-
 “ monize : But to differ in Opinion, is
 “ not repugnant to Peace in the way ;
 “ though the Difference shall be taken
 “ away when we come Home.

Now if it be otherwise with any Man
 that owns the Reformed Religion ; I
 must tell you, that though he may pro-
 fess he is of the Reformed Religion, he
 is *Popish* in the Protestant Profession.
 For these are Matters wherein they of
 the Protestant Religion do agree : And
 if any Man question any of those, he is
 so far *Popish* in the Protestant Profes-
 sion.

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DISCOURSE XI.

The Deceitfulness of Sin.

H E B. iii. 13.

*Take heed, lest any of you be hardned
through the Deceitfulness of Sin.*

WE are in this World in a State ^{Disc. XI.} of Probation, and have many Enemies to encounter with : So that our Condition is very dangerous, both from *Force* and *Fraud* ; and from *Fraud* the worst of the two. For if a Man be ill dealt withal, and forced, he is excused because he could not help it ? But if any Man suffer from *Fraud*, he is both laughed at, and Self-condemned. Now, He is couzened and cheated, that upon any Representation made to him of things without, either doth or permits what is in it self Sinful or Unlawful.

T 4

And

Vol. I. And by *this Rule* you may estimate all
 ~~~~~ that I have to say.

I shall,

I. Give you an account of the *Deceitfulness of Sin*. And,

II. Shew you the great *Reason* we have to *take heed*, that we be not deceived.

I. My Business shall be to shew you the *Deceitfulness* of Sin, and how much thereby we are in Danger. And this I will do in ten Particulars.

I. Evil takes *another Name*, though it doth always retain its Nature. And because it must not be known by its own Name, it doth adopt it self into the Family of some of the Vertues, as if it were like to some of them. And things that are alike do oft impose upon unwary Persons. Now because a particular Rule is best known by *Instances*, I will mention several. Covetousness passeth for a thrifty Temper, and good Husbandry. Prodigality for being Generous. Vanity is reputed necessary Remission of Mind:  
 And

*The Deceitfulness of Sin.*

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Disc. XI.

And Foolish Talking to be Affable Conversation. Lavish Expence of Time, goes for Exercise and Recreation due to the Body. Finding Fault with Others, is reckoned to be Reproof of Sin. Sharpness and Severity, to be strictness of Conscience. Backbiting is accounted an Endeavour for Reformation. Jealousie and Suspicion to be Care for Right and Truth. Busie meddling with other Mens Affairs, Lives, and Judgments, is said to be Activity for the Advancement of Religion. And to controul others Liberty, a Care for their Souls. Presumption is Thought to be Faith in God. Curious Determinations beyond Scripture, to be the Improvement of Faith: And inconsiderate Dulness to be the Denial of our Reason. Malecontent to be Sorrow for Sin. Excessive Use of the Creatures, to be Christian Liberty. Compliance beyond Measure to be Good Fellowship. Fond Imaginations to be Divine Inspiration. Extravagancies of Passion, to be the unavoidable Motion of a Cholerick Temper. Taking too much upon Ones Self, and Over-bearing the Company in Discourse and Converse, to be better Improvements of the Talent

Vol. I. Talent. Fierceness in a Sect, in a particular Way or Mode, to be a greater Care of Religion. Speaking without Sense, to be the Simplicity of the Spirit. Sheepishness, to be Modesty. Diffidence to be Humility. Affording hard Measure, to be standing for ones Right. Petulancy and Animosity, to be Generousness, Courage, Good Mettle, and like a Man of Spirit. Cunning Craftiness, to be Prudence and Policy. Neglect and Careless Omissions, to be Infirmities only, the Weakness of the Saints.

Thus there are many things which pass for a due Temper, and regular Motion in Religion, which are not the Perfections they are taken for, but rather the contrary. I cannot now stand to convince these severally of Deceit; but if they be enquired into, they will not be found to be the things they pretend to be.

The 2d and 3d I will put together. Sometimes Evil, suggesteth to us *Pleasure and Delight*, and sometimes *Gain and Profit*. And these two, Pleasure and Profit, are the Baits that take with all Men that are not of fixed and resolved Vertue. Now the Scripture

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ture supposeth both of these; and therefore we read of the *Pleasures of Sin*, that they are but for a Season. And also it telleth us of the *Wages of Unrighteousness*. But solid and true Pleasure, Gain, and Satisfaction to a Mind well instructed, is only to be found in the ways of Vertue and Goodness. For Solomon tells us, That *the Ways of Wisdom are pleasant*: And *Godliness is great Gain*, saith the Apostle.

4. Evil holds us in hand that it is a matter of our *Right*, and that which we may do in the use of our *Liberty*. Whereas'tis not Power, to be able to do that which is not fit to be done, *Ad malum non datur posse. Posse malum, non est posse.* This is not Liberty, but Licentiousness, Wantonness, to do Evil, or to serve any Lust. But we are greatly bent to maintain our Right, and shew our Power. Jezebel, spake thus to Ahab, *Illud possumus, quod jure possumus.* when he was troubled for Naboth's Vineyard: *Dost thou govern Israel, and knowest not how to have Naboth's Vineyard? Arise, eat bread, and let thine Heart be merry: I will give thee the Vineyard of Naboth thee Jezreelite.* And she gave it him, but upon strange Terms; by wilful Murther, Perjury, and Subornation, thus did she use her Power, 1 King. 21.

5. Evil



Vol. I. 5. Evil Covers it self with some  
 ~~~~~ probable Notion, or Circumstance.  
 Nothing in this vain World is more
 usual then Colours, Pretences, Repre-
 sentations, Excuses, Appearances con-
 trary to Reality and Truth. *Joseph's*
Brethren's selling him is covered with
 their *not having their Hands upon him.*
David's murthering *Uriah* by drawing
 him out on the Forlorn; his num-
 bring the People, by the Privilege
 of a Prince. When was it known
 that Evil walked abroad without a Dis-
 guise? A fair pretence for a foul
 Action. The Devil's Hook is too well
 baited to be seen. The Serpent pro-
 posed to our *first Parents* their being
 like unto Gods. *The lips of the strange*
Woman drop as the Honey Comb: and
her mouth is smother than Oyl. The
 Worshippers of the Golden Calf con-
 secrated a day unto the Lord. *Ba-*
laam is in shew for the Observance
 of God: But he taught *Balaak* to cast
 a stumbling Block before the Chil-
 dren of *Israel.* *Saul* takes upon him
 to offer a burnt-offering contrary to
 the expresse Command of God. He
 saith, *The Philistines are upon me, and*
I have not made supplication unto the
Lord:

Totus Mun-
dus agit
Histrionem.
Honestum.

habetur pro
inutili.

Qui nescit
disimulare
nescit vive-
re.

Gen. 37.

29.

2 Sam. 11.

15.

2 Sam. 14,

etc.

In nomine
Domini in-
cipit omne
malum.

Gen. 3. 5.

Prov. 5. 3.

Intelligitur
non tam de
Sexu muli-
ebri; quam
de tentati-
one suavi.

Ex. 32.

Numb. 23.

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Rev. 2. 14.

1 Sam. 13.

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The Deceitfulness of Sin.

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Lord : and he spared *the fattest of the* Disc. XI.
Cattle that he might offer them in Sa- 1 Sam. 14.
cifice. *Corah, Dathan and Abiram* justi- 15.
 fied their Rebellion against *Moses* and
Aaron with this pretence, that they took Num. 16.
too much upon them : Seeing that all the 3, 7.
congregation was Holy, as well as them-
 selves ; therefore why should they lift up
themselves above the Congregation of the
Lord ? Here is a pretence of maintain-
 ing the just *Liberty* of the Congregation.
 So they that would take away the Life
 of our Blessed Saviour say it is *expedient*
 that one Man should dye, and that the
 Nation perish not. *John 11. 50.*

6. Evil Warrants it self sometimes
 by the difference of *Time* and *Place*,
 sometimes by *Measure* and *Degree*, some-
 times by *Mode* and *Manner*. Forasmuch
 as that may be done at one *Time* that Licitis peri-
 may not be done at another ; distinguish miss omnes.
 but of *Times*, (they will say) and then
 they think they shall be able to justify
 themselves. And then by *Measure* and Bonum ex
Degree, although it be one of the most integris
 difficult things in the World to assign e usis, ma-
Mode and *Measure*, yet Man will say it lum ex quo-
 may be done in another *Place*, though libet de je-
 not in this ; and in this *Manner*, though ctu.
 not in that, or after any *Fashion* ; and
 to

Vol. I. to such a Measure and Degree. The
 ~~~~~ Sluggard was for a little Sleep, a little  
 slumber, &c. till Evil had taken hold of  
 him, and got an advantage upon him.  
 In many Cases it is very hard to fix the  
 utmost bounds of Good and Evil, because  
 these part as Day and Night which are  
 separated by Twilight : so that there is  
 as dim Day, light between both. It is  
 a very nice point for a Man to know  
 how far he may go, and farther he  
 may not.

7. Evil pleads sometimes the *Necessity* of the Case, and that it is unavoidable. The *Law of the Time*, the *Necessity of the Case*, This answers all Objections to the contrary. Though I must tell you, there is no Necessity at all to do that which is evil ; for the worst that the World can do unto us, is not so bad, as to do Evil. And we must rather expose to hazard the loss of our Lives, and all we have, than give God an Offence. For it is better to dye in Reconciliation to God, than to Live Ten Thousand Years in all the pleasures and jollity of this World. This we find was *Herod's* justification of himself, when he did contrary to the very sense of his own mind. He cut off *John Baptist's*

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*tist's* Head because of his Oath, and be- Disc. XI.  
cause of those that were with him at that time. But take this for a notion, *Necessity* may put us upon Inconveniences, but *Necessity* must never put us upon Iniquity, or make us consent to Evil. There is no *Necessity* of Sin : for altho' we Live no longer here, we shall Live in a better State. We must not save our Lives, and destroy the cause of Life. To live is to be in Good Temper of Mind, and regular in our Actions and Practice.

8. When Evil hath once entangled us, there is another Evil (and it may be a greater) thought necessary to *hide*, or *extenuate* it. For Evil if it be lookt into, will be ashamed of it self. Upon this account it is that Men are ashamed to own it, and sometimes with a Lye deny it. When *Cain* had murdered his Brother, to the very face of God himself, he tells a Lye. So *Ananias* and *Saphirah*, when they had sold the Possession and pretended that they brought all, and laid it down at the Apostle's feet, whenas it was but a part. It had been an Act of Christian *Charity*, to have brought any part ; so they had been sincere and hearty in it : but they are said to Lye  
to



Vol. I. to the Holy Ghost. Seldom one Evil goes alone. *Gehazi* did the first Evil Action in going after *Naaman* the Syrian and asking him for Gold, and Change of Rayment, without his Master's Commission. But then this puts him upon another Lye to justifie it, and then more followed, as you may see in the Story.

9. Evil justifies it self by *Prescription* and *General Practise*. So it was formerly, and so it is still. And this is taken for a Justification. This was the practice of those *Israelites* that were not carried away Captive, who dissembled with the Prophet, and with God himself. Who, tho' they enquired what they should do, yet were resolved to do as their *Fathers* did before them; because then, they said, it was well with them, when they offered Incense to the *Queen of Heaven*, and therefore they would do so again. Things that are in use and custom, Men think they may do; and what have been done before them. What, will they say, shall I be wiser than my Forefathers? This is the Answer of many *Papists* among us, who will hear nothing that is said to them, because they will not Damn those that went before them, nor pretend to be wiser than their

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their Ancestors ; others say, what! shall we call into Question common Practice ? do not those that are wiser and more learned than I, do the same things ? Nay, do not Men of Place and Power do the same things ? This is just like *Ahab* to *Micaiah*, 1 *Kings* 22. Do not all the Prophets speak so and so ? let thy word be like unto theirs. Not a word of what God should say unto him, or what was *True* and *Right* ; but let thy word be like unto the rest of the Prophets. So it is with many Men, they follow other Mens practice, without considering what is *Right* and *Fit* to be done.

10. I shall observe in the Last place, that which is most dangerous of all others, and that is this ; when the *first motion* towards Repentance and Conversion is lookt upon as if it were the Sovereign Remedy of *Repentance* it self. As if *Sorrow* for Sin, were the whole product of Repentance ; whereas indeed, that which is true Repentance, must be accompanied with the Forsaking of Sin, and bringing forth the Fruits of Righteousness. By which St. *John* means the Reformation and Amendment of our Lives.

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And

Vol. I

And that I may the better satisfy you in this, I desire you to consider, that the *first motions* of Repentance have been, where nothing that was *good* followed upon it. We read that *Judas* was sorry for his Sin, in betraying our Saviour; but what followed upon it? nothing but Desperation and Self-murder. *Cain* was sensible of the Murder of his Brother, and affected with the Consequence that he Thought would follow upon it; for, saith he, every one that meets me will kill me: Though this fear seemed very unreasonable at that Time. We read in the 2 *Pet.* 2. 18. of some that were *clean escaped* from the Pollutions of the World, that were again entangled, whose Last end was worse than their Beginning. And that it is better not to have known the way of Righteousness, than afterward to depart from the Holy Commandment. My *caution* therefore is, That if you look towards God, and your Minds serve you to make any Application to him; That you pursue that Good motion till you bring it into a settled State; for otherwise the first motion towards Repentance may prove an Aggravation of your Sin, and heavier Condemnation.

Thus

## The Deceitfulness of Sin.

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Disc. XI.

Thus I have given you Ten Instances of the *Deceitfulness of Sin*. And, as I told you at first, it will trouble us less to be over-born and forced, than to be cheated. For the former we may not be able to help; but we cannot be deceived, if we be but as wise as we should, and ought to be. That one Man is Stronger and Richer than another may not be in our power to help; but if a Man be not as wise and virtuous as another, it may be much his own Fault. For this depends upon his own due care, and the Improvement of those Faculties that God hath given him. And I am of opinion, that *we should all be wise enough one for another, if we were but equally honest*. The Truth is, if any one be dishonest, he may deceive a good Man: for such a Man is given to Charity, and apt to think of others, as he finds himself, and so to have a good Opinion. But if I am cheated a *second time*, I am a Fool. We read of Persons that lay under worldly Disadvantages, that yet arrived to great Wisdom and Understanding. The Poor Man by his Wisdom saved the City, *Eccles. 5*. And we read of a wise Woman that saved her Husband, and a great many

U 2      People.



Vol. I. People. And poor *Lazarus* was wise  
 ~~~~~ for Eternity. Therefore, as I said, we  
 may be Over-born by Power without any
 great Disparagement; but we cannot
 be Cheated, but it must have an ill Re-
 flexion upon our selves. For no Man
 makes a bargain unless he please, and
 he need not unless he will. If he want
 Experience, why hath he not Advice?
 So that, if he be Cheated it is long of
 his weakness, willfulness, or rashness;
 for he might have prevented it. No
 Man is ashamed that anothea is preferred
 before him in Wealth and Ability: but
 the meanest Creature will be impatient
 to be thought to want Wit, or to be ac-
 counted a Fool.

Having thus given an account of
 the *Deceitfulness of Sin*; I will,

II. Shew you in some Particulars,
 how great *Reason* we have, according
 to the Advice of the Apostle, to *take*
heed that we are not deceived.

I. Because in this State we run all
 manner of *Hazards* and *Dangers*. To
 which God that hath a care of his Crea-
 tures, doth yet suffer us to be exposed;
 and that Grace he affords us is not only
 for Ornament, but for Conflict. Some use
 the

The Deceitfulness of Sin.

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the Grace of God more, and some less; and others wholly neglect it. God did account, that we should use and employ the Faculties which he gave us; and 'tis unaccountable to God, if any Man comes into Humane Nature, and doth not so use Mind and Understanding (that is capable of God, and receptive from God, and fit to make acknowledgments to him) I say, if he doth not use it for these Purposes. For here we are to *fight the Good fight of Faith*, 1 Tim. 6. 12. *To run a Race*, 1 Cor. 9. 24, 26. and *obtain a Prize*. In the Work of Religion, much is here to be done, many Temptations to be resisted, many Conflicts to be made.

2. Our *several* Faculties have different Inclinations, and some of them are not at all capable of *Reason*, therefore not to be governed by any Moral Considerations: which make it a very hard Province that we are to act in. Many of our Faculties are governed only by Restraint, and are not held or drawn by the *Cords of a Man*. As for Example, *Appetite*; for which Reason Solomon saith, *put a Knife to thy Throat, if thou beest a Man given unto it*. For Reason will not satisfy an Ex-

Vol. I. orbitant Appetite, and this creates to us great Difficulty. This is the Rule in all things, That a Man act according to *Reason*, which is the *Candle of the Lord* set up in him; and by this he should be directed, and see his way before him. For even the Grace of God doth adjoyn it self only to our Higher Principles. For this end it is given to Guide and direct them; but for our lower Faculties, they are otherwise to be dealt with: we must offer Violence to them if they be Exorbitant.

3. Things without us, and round about us, presented with their several Advantages, do many times *Provoke* and *Allure* us; and are hardly to be denied. And a Man hath nothing to withhold him but the Vertue of his Mind and Respect to God. And abundance in the World are so Prophane, as to decry these Principles, as things of Fancy and Imagination. Therefore it is necessary that we should be settled in a *State of Vertue*, or we shall never, like *Joseph*, be able to resist Evil and to say, *how can I do this Wickedness, and sin against God?* Therefore saith *Solomon*, *Prov. 2.* Let Understanding guide thee, let Discretion keep thee,

4. That

4. That which should be for our ^{Disc. XI.} Security, viz. Company and Converse: this oftentimes becomes a Snare to us: Though (as Solomon saith) two is better than one, because if one fall the other shall lift him up. And this was the Design of God in making a *Second* to be an Help unto the *First*; that so, that which is Finite, might be better secured by another: yet it often falls out that we are in great Hazard by our very Company and Converse. For Company is of a bewitching, Molding and Transforming Nature: And therefore we should take great heed of our Company, and Associates. Go not (saith Solomon) in the way of Sinners, avoid it, pass from it, and pass away. And David saith, *sit not in the seat of the scornful*. And we have a Rule, that *whosoever is not known by himself, may be known by his Company*. For Converse doth assimilate; and a Man either finds his Company such as he is, or he will be like them. Ecclus. 13. 1. *For he that toucheth Pitch that defileth, will be defiled; and he that goeth with vain Persons shall be vain.* *Malus malum aut invenit, aut facit.*

Vol. I. 5. He that is officious to bring us
 ~~~~~ into his Condemnation, he is forward  
 to fit us with suitable Objects that  
 shall raise our Apprehensions, and draw  
 us into Evil. This he did to our first  
 Parents. It is good for Food, and desi-  
 rable to make one Wise, said the Ser-  
 pent to *Eve*. And we read *Matth. 4.*  
*10.* That *Satan* shewed to our Savi-  
 our all the Kingdoms of the World,  
 and the Glory of them, and said *These*  
*will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down*  
*and Worship me.* And we read, that  
 he was a Lying Spirit in the Mouths  
 of four hundred false Prophets at one  
 time. And that the *Devil* is so bu-  
 fie to seduce and draw Men into Evil,  
 may appear to be the common Sense  
 of *Mankind*, by those Expressions we  
 find in the *Arraignment* of notorious  
 Malefactors, who are said, not to have  
 the Fear of God before their Eyes,  
 but to act by the Instigation of the  
 Devil. As he that endeavours to Pu-  
 rifie himself shall not want the Divine  
 Assistance to encourage and assist him;  
 so on the contrary he that neglects  
 himself, and consents to known Ini-  
 quity, shall not want those that will  
 Drive him on. And as we say, *he must*  
*needs*

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## *The Deceitfulness of Sin.*

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*needs go, that the Devil drives.* But *Disc. XI.*  
then,

6. There are many Things impure, and contrary to Religion, to which we are tempted, that the World do not reckon among the greatest Crimes. There are other Evils that are destructive to us, besides *Treason, Murther, and Theft* : And these we are to beware of, as well as those that make us obnoxious to Humane Laws ; as I will give you some *Instances*. It is a very great Evil to make God a *Mean*, and the World an *End* ; to name God, *Uti Deo, &* and to intend the World. *frui Mundo.* I dread to have to do with any Man that will make use of his Religion, to gain him Credit, and to make a Bargain. As also to be under the Power of the World, and wholly at its Beck or Call ; or to be under the Power of ungoverned Passions ; to be vainly fraught and possess'd ; to be out of the true use of Reason, and Self-Government. These are instances of Evils that are very destructive, though the World takes little notice of them, and do not reckon them in the number of mortal Sins. Yet if a Man will secure his Interest for Eternity, he must take care to

Vol. I. to avoid these things. And herein is our great Danger, because Men do not charge themselves in these things, as in other Crimes.

7. Man is such a *Compound*, that Heaven and Earth, as it were, meet in him, Terms that are extremely distant. Man in respect of his Mind, is qualified to converse with Angels, and to attend upon God. And in respect of these noble Faculties, he is liable to be tempted to Insolency, Arrogancy, and great Presumption, and Self-exaltation. For it cannot be denied, but that in respect of his highest Faculties, he is the *Image of God*, which is his Honour; being both Intelligent and Voluntary, having Understanding, Liberty, and Freedom; which is his Prerogative, above all other Creatures below him. But yet in respect of these, he is tempted to lift up himself, and this was the fall of *Lucifer*. Though there be no Reason for it: For what is a Ray that flows from the Sun, to the Sun it self? which the Sun could spare, without any Diminution. Why should an Arbitrary and Precarious Being lift up it self, and leave God out? What an Iniquity is this! For such Beings to act as Independent,

pendent, Self-sufficient, never to acknowledge God as Original, or referring to him as Final, or resting in him as the Centre of his Spirit ! This is a high misbehaviour in an intelligent Agent, far from Duty, Humility, or Modesty. Yet this he may be tempted unto, by reason of his Height and Excellency, in respect of his higher Faculties. Now in respect of his *lower Parts*, he is apt to sink down into Sensuality and Brutishness : Man in Honour, and not understanding himself, is like the Beasts that perish. From all which you may perceive, in how great Danger Man is, and what great need there is that he be not deceived.

8. I add, If we do not use Self-Government, and moderate our Powers by subduing the Inferiour to the Superiour, we fail in that which is our proper Work and Province, as we are invested with Intellectual Nature. And if we are led to gratifie Sense against Reason, we are cheated and couzened. We render those Words of the Apostle, *Rom. 13.14.* σαρκὸς πρόνοιαν, to make *provision for the flesh* : but the *Greek* word signifies to make it the Business of Mind and Understanding to cater for the *Body* : which is no less than  
to



Vol. I. to make it the Employment of the Spirit, to feed the Beast; when it should be  
 ~~~~~  
Ad majora nati sumus. the Business of Mind and Understanding, to contemplate God and Things Divine. For otherwise, the Mind of Man, is as the Field of *Solomon's* Sluggard, that instead of bringing a good Crop, is over-grown with Thorns and Briars. And a Man lives in a Lye, and hath no true Judgment. For the use of Judgment is to observe the difference of things : which he doth not, that knows not how to value Spiritual and Eternal things before those that are Present and Temporal.

9. *Lastly*, If God be not understood and acknowledged in our worldly Enjoyments, and recommended to us by them : If he be not intended in all our Actions, then do we not comply with the Relation we stand in to God ; nor act according to our highest Principles, nor answer our Capacity; nor are true to our own Interest. For it is the work of Mind and Understanding, to seek after God, and to find him out in his Ways and Works, as you read *Acts* 17. 27. To be without God in the World, is our Degeneracy in full proportion; and to Alienate our selves from him, is the greatest

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greatest and truest *Sacrilege*. For our highest Faculties are God's Peculiar, God's Appropriate, God's Reserve, made for God, and fit to attend upon him, and to receive from him. Since therefore there is this Danger, *1st*. Let us act with Caution and with good Advice, by Conversation with the best and wisest Men. For 'tis an easie matter to be deceived without great Care and Diligence. *2^{dly}*. But chiefly let us make *Application to God*, by Meditation and Prayer, who will not be wanting to us. Let us carefully avoid all Presumption, Pride, Arrogancy, and Self-assuming. Do not on the sudden, but see before you do, and understand well before you act. And *in all thy Ways acknowledge God, and lean not to thy own Understanding.*

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DISCOURSE XII.

The Conversion of a Sinner.

E Z E K. xviii. 27.

*When the wicked Man turneth away
from his Wickedness that he hath
committed, and doth that which is
lawful and right, he shall save his
Soul alive.*

IF we would be true to our great In-Disc. XII.
terest, and be wise for the great Con-
cernments of our Souls; and secure them
for Eternity; we must then put Evil
from us, and repent of what we
have done amiss; we must disclaim
it, and condemn our selves in it; we
must be reformed, and return to our
Duty.

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I say,

I. That the wicked *ought* to Reform.

II. That they *may*.

I. That the wicked *ought* to Reform.

And that will appear upon these Suggestions.

First, *Sin* is contrary to Reason, Credit, and Safety.

1. Sin is contrary to *Reason*.

This is the malignant and mischievous Nature of every sinful Action. It is in it self *Unreasonable*, contrary to all Wisdom and Understanding : And you will easily grant, that what is against Reason ought not to be done at all ; or if it be done, that it ought to be revoked. We cannot say worse of a Man, than that he is an *Unreasonable* Person : nor worse of an Action, than that it is contrary to Reason. If a Man will hear no Reason, who will have to do with him ? For he that will not hear Reason, will do no *Right* ; and therefore

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therefore what is done against Reason, must be revoked, and disclaimed. For what is so done is done against Right, which is the Rule of all Actions. For Right is the measure of all Motion, and the Law of Heaven. Right is so sacred a thing that even Poverty, Necessity, Calamity, and Misery, which make Cases very pitiable, and compassionate; they are not considerable, in competition with Right; for so we read, *Lev. 19. 15. Thou shalt not countenance a poor man in his cause.* Be the Man poor or rich, the Right of his Case, and nothing else must be considered in Judgment.

2. A sinful Action is *Discreditable* to any Person whatsoever. It is said of the Sons of *Eli*, that by their wickedness, they *made themselves vile*. The higher any Man is in Place, the greater he is in Power, the more eminent for Birth and Dignity; the greater is his Fault if he commit a sinful Action. No Man whatsoever hath Credit enough to countenance that which is wicked, and ought not to be done.

1 Sam. 3.

13.

Omne animi
Vitium tan-

to conspe-
ctus in se
Crimen ha-
bet, quanto
major qui
peccat ha-
betur.

3. It is Grievous, Painful, and Intolerable to bear the *Effects* of wicked and sinful Actions, and to vary from
X Right

Vol. I. Right. Unless a Man disclaim and revoke it, such Actions are very costly and dearly paid for. Though they promise Pleasure for the present, yet they lay the Foundation of an Evil Conscience, and a disquieted and discontented Mind; and if they be not repented of we shall rue it to Eternity : And that, not only in respect of loss, but Misery; which we cannot now express. For we know not what is meant by *Tophets Burning*, nor fully understand what is comprehended in those Words of enduring the *Worm that dieth not, and the Fire that goeth not out*. Let no Man deceive himself; real Satisfaction, true Content must have a solid Foundation, a clear Conscience, honest Intention, Right Actions, an unblameable Tenour and Course of Life. And that is the first : the Malignancy and Naughtiness of every sinful Action, as being a Contradiction to Reason, against Right, the Agents *Discredit*, a Grievous, *Painful*, an Intollerable Thing.

Secondly, Being such, it cannot be Justified. For this is most certain, whatsoever is contrary to the Reason of the Thing, or to the Right of the Case, is morally null and void, though it be done

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done by any Person whatsoever. I say, Disc. XII.
Null as to the validity of the Thing ;
 though not null and void as to the
 Mischief it doth to the Agent. It is
 without all Authority , and Right.
 For this Power is not in God himself ;
 Psal. 97. 7. *For his Throne is established*
in Righteousness. It is a principal Mis-
 carriage ; so that a bad Man is not a
 Man of Power and Priviledge, he is
 not a Man of Excellency ; but he is,
 as a Man that is Deaf, Blind, or Lame ;
 that is not distinguished from other Men,
 by any Perfection, but by Impotency
 and Deformity. As the *Palsie-Motion*, *Hoc est Con-*
cupiscentia
in parte Ap-
petitiva,
quod est Pa-
ralysis in
parte moti-
va Bern.
 which seems to be quicker than other ;
 but it is not from Strength but from
 Weakness : No Man can justifie a sinful
 Action, but to a bad Conscience, or be-
 fore an unrighteous Judge ; who is either
 Ignorant or Partial, or himself as bad , *Ad malum*
non datur
posse.
 by undue Principles, corrupt Interest, or
 an Abuse of Power. For it is not *to be*
able, for a Man to do that which *ought*
not to be done.

Thirdly, Every sinful Action, howe-
 ver we may stand to it, or may be
 countenanced here in the World ; will
 be discountenanced sooner or later,
 whether we will or no. For it will

Vol. I. fall under Censure, and be brought to Judgment, and condemned and punished. For *Right* shall finally prevail : Things themselves will not long continue out of Order. Folly and Madness wil at last be weary and ashamed of themselves : Besides the Judgment of God, which will be according to Truth, *Rom. 2. 5. For God will bring to light the hidden works of darkness, &c.*

Fourthly, If we do not repent of that which we have done sinfully, it will lie upon us as the blackest Spot, as the heaviest Judgment, and as the worst Malady. Men are sensible of bodily Evils, but mental are the heaviest. Moral Evil is the greatest of all Evil ; for it hath the basest Symptoms, and most unhappy Consequences, and the most frequent Twitches. For moral Evil makes an internal Wound, a Wound in the Conscience, where there is the quickest and tenderest Sense. For all bodily Evils, the Creator of all things hath vouchsafed Remedies : But for the Evils of the Mind, for Wounds in the Conscience, there is no Remedy, but the Motion of the Mind in the way of Repentance, and Application to the Blood of Christ for Expiation, and Atone-

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Atonement. *For a wounded Spirit who* Disc. XII.
can bear? Prov. 18. 15.

Now on the other side, if a Man doth repent, he may be released ; for Repentance doth alter the Case. For this is most certain, that those who are finite and fallible, if they do fail or miscarry, upon Repentance may be restored to Favour ; and if the Fault be repented of, it is morally made null and void. And what *we* repent of, *God* hath declared he will pardon. And if we repent, and disclaim, and God pardon, it is then as if it had not been done. Then also the Goodness of God is rightly represented, and his Patience understood, and the means of Grace are in their right Use ; and those that were spiritually Dead are quickned unto Life. For by sinful Actions Men are said to be *Dead*, Dead in Trespasses and Sins ; And St. Jude 12. hath it *Twice Dead*, once Dead by sinning against the Rule and Law of Right ; and dead again by continuing in Impenitency, Contumacy and hardness of Heart.

Fifthly, There is no Expectation either of God's Pardon, or of Help from him, but in the way of Repentance. For who can promise himself any thing

Vol. I. out of the Terms of the Covenant of Grace ; *viz.* *Repentance* from all dead Works, Resolution of Obedience to God, and *Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ*. Repentance is so indispensably necessary, that he which hath once done amiss, in respect of the Habit of the Mind, he doth it again and again that doth not repent. For he is the same Man; and Men act like themselves. You have a good Form of Words, when Men are furious, spiteful, and devilish, we tell them, that *They shew their Spirits* ; and it is very right.

I will now suggest to you two Places of Scripture for the proof of what I have said in this fifth particular, *viz.* That there is no expectation of God's Pardon, or of Help from him, but in the way of Repentance, *2 Tim. 2. 25.* *If God peradventure will give them repentance to life.* Which shews that there is great hazard of their Repentance, who are wilful Opposers of the Truth; and that God will pardon them no other way, intimates this to us, That the Case is very *hazardous*, whether such as are wilful Opposers of the Truth, shall ever be brought to Repentance. The other place is *Act. 8. 20.* where

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where the Apostle speaks to *Simon Magus*, *Repent of this thy wickedness, if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee.* Which shews that his Sin was not unpardonable, but that there was no possibility of Pardon without Repentance.

Sixthly and *Lastly*, We are all under Obligation to repent, tho' there would no Good come to us by it. For we are God's Creatures, and hold of him; from whence it follows, that we ought to serve him, and to do his Will, and to be at his Command: For he created us, and doth maintain us; and this being our Tenure, we owe Duty and observance to him; and if we fail in our Duty to him, in that Case, we ought to deprecate his Displeasure, and to condemn our selves. In that Case we owe humble Acknowledgments, and we are to repent and revoke what we have done amiss. The Performance of Obedience and Duty to God, that is the *First* Right; but to repent and ask Forgiveness, that is the *Second*. Now, that Repentance shall have a good Effect, and take place, *that* depends upon *Evangelical Revelation*: But the Obligation to Repentance, that is natural. I should, in the use of sober Reason, think, that

Vol. I. if I had failed and were mistaken, and wanting in my Duty to God, that I ought to humble my self before him, acknowledge my Offence, and ask him pardon: and doing this, I should imagine (in the use of sober Reason) that God was Placable. But this Supposition is put out of all doubt and question by the Gospel; which gives us Assurance of Pardon and Remission of Sin, if we do repent and ask God Forgiveness, and renounce and disclaim what we have done amiss. 'Tis true, we are obliged to repent whether God will pardon or not; because we owe Duty and Obedience to God, as we are his Creatures; and if we do not repent, we do, upon account, sin again. For this take for granted; whosoever hath done amiss, and doth not repent of it, and revoke it, he lives in that Sin that he hath committed. For he is in such a Frame and Disposition, that had he the like Occasion and Temptation offered him he would do it again. So that both *Nature* and *Grace* do meet here, and shew the indispensable Necessity of Repentance, in case of contracted Guilt, and a wounded Conscience.

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But because I am to give you *Encouragement* ; In the *En-* Disc. XII.

II. Place I will hasten to *that* : And that which I shall say upon this Head is, to give you Assurance, that through the Grace, with God doth afford, and his Assistance of the Powers and Faculties of his Creatures ; we *may* Repent of all Evil done, and make Application to God, and Deprecate his Displeasure, and leave off to sin, and Return to our Duty, and so Obtain his Pardon. It is therefore advisable, that since we are, all along in this Life, in a State of Weakness, and Imperfection ; that we be always in the motion of Repentance, and Exercise of Faith in God, by Jesus Christ. And this Exhortation and Advice I ground upon the Word of God, which tells us, *That if the wicked Man turns from his wickedness, and doth that which is lawful and Right, he shall save his Soul alive.*

Neither let any Man say, that these Words signifie no more, than if one should say to an Impotent Man, Remove this Mountain, and thou shalt have such or such a Reward : Or to bid a Man to comprehend the Ocean in the

Vol. I. the Hollow of his Hand, and it shall
 ~~~~~ so or so be done unto him. These are  
 Ludicrous Ways of Speaking : and such  
 as must not be put upon God, nor in a-  
 ny Case attributed unto him. God  
 doth not mock and deride his poor  
 Creatures, when he doth invite them  
 to him. This were to Reproach one  
 that were Impotent, to bid him come  
 to him, whenas he knew he could not  
 stir a step. Therefore when God saith  
 to the Sinner, Repent and Turn from  
 your Wickedness, and you *shall save your*  
*Soul alive* ; it doth suppose, that either  
 he *is* Able, or that he *will make* him so.  
 It being Madness and Folly to take in-  
 to Consideration, Things that are Im-  
 possible : all Motion towards such things  
 is to no purpose.

But here some may be ready to In-  
 terpose, and Say : Surely God is not in  
 good earnest, because he might if he  
 would ; for who can Resist the Divine  
 Will ? This is a Considerable *Objection*,  
 and doth require an *Answer*. For some  
 Men put all upon God, and say when  
 He please to come, with Irresistable  
 Grace, the Work will be done ; and  
 the Man shall be Converted ; for *who*  
*hath resisted his Will* ? And till then, the  
 Work

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Work will not be done, for they can do nothing. But to this I Answer.

It doth not follow, that because God doth not *Inforce*, that therefore he doth not *Enable*. That God should Force agrees neither with the Nature of *God*, nor with the Nature of *Man*; but that God should Enable, this is natural to the Relation we stand in to God, who is Original to our Being. And to make this out; this Notion is verified throughout the whole Creation. For there is not to be found in the whole Creation of God, in any part of the World, any thing that is a *Procurant* Cause, but is also a *Conservant* Cause, till the thing be settled in a State of Sufficiency, and Subsistency. Even this dull *Earth* that we tread upon doth maintain all the Plants that do grow out of it. Take a view of the *Irrational Creatures*, and you shall find, that every Creature that is Original to any Thing, doth certainly pursue its first Production, by after Conservancy, and ready Maintenance, and never leave off, till it be settled in the State of Sufficiency, and Able to subsist of it self.

Now



Vol. I. Now thus I argue : If this be an  
 ~~~~~ Impression of God upon all Creatures,  
 and a Perfection which He hath placed in them, is not this much more in God ? I therefore take this to be a certain Proposition ; That he which doth give the first Being, gives farther Strength for Continuance. But *Force* agrees not, either with the *Nature of God*, or with the *Nature of Man*.

(1.) It agrees not with the *Nature of God*. An Intellectual Agent, that hath all Knowledge and Power, useth neither Fraud nor Violence. This is the Necessity of those that are Indigent.

He that hath all Power, and all Wisdom, is never put upon the use either of Fraud or Force. This (as I said) belongs to Indigent Causes, and cannot be supposed of God, who is Infinite in Power, and Wisdom. Then,

(2.) It doth not agree with the *Nature of Man*. For such is the *Nature of Man*, that if He do not Mean and Consent, it is not reputed a Human Action ; for nothing is a Human Act, but what proceeds from the Judgment of Reason and the Liberty of the Will, We are always bound to make use of
 our

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our Reason, for our Guidance, and then to exercise Liberty in pursuance of the Dictates of our Mind. 'Tis true, in this compounded State of Flesh and Spirit, we are so addicted to satisfy the inferior Appetite, and so Averse to the Dictates of sober Reason, and the Guidance of the Divine Spirit ; That had we any thing material to allege to the contrary, it would certainly make us let all alone, come of it what would. And this would be the greatest Discouragement in the World : If we could allege that we were Impotent, and Insufficient ; and that though the Grace of God were absolutely necessary ; yet we were not sure of it. 'Tis therefore necessary for us to believe, that through the Grace, and Assistance of God, we may be Able, and that we shall not fail thereof. For God is present with us, and puts good Thoughts into our Mind, and will promote them into Execution, if we be not wanting to our selves. We are here in a State of Contest and Fight against great Variety of Enemies abroad ; and there is Inclinations of the sensitive Powers within, and the Allurements and Provocations of Objects : and against all these it is too little, to Oppose Nature's Strength.

For

Vol. I. For Nature is divided, Flesh and Spirit, and Flesh in Opposition to Spirit. Now the only Foundation of Certainty and Ground of Encouragement, is from the *Grace* and *Assistance* of God : and this we are assured of, if we duly apply our selves to God. For the infinite, wise and good God doth not call us to that , which he doth not Enable us to perform. This were to put that upon God, which neither Scripture nor Reason doth allow. For this were in effect to say, That God had not a Mind we should do that, which he calls upon us to do ; if he should with-hold his Grace, Help and Assistance. For this God knows, that he is the First Cause , and that the Second can do nothing without the First, and that the First must Begin. For this is repugnant in it self, that a Second Cause should have the place of the First Cause; or be Self sufficient ; this is contrary to the order of the Creation. Now if any Man should Arrogate to himself a Self-sufficiency to do any Thing, he would make himself the First Cause : Whereas, He neither is, nor can be the First Cause, nor Original. Therefore all good must begin at God ; and
nothing

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nothing that is Good, can be done Disc. XII.
without Him; and Therefore he must
not only *Countenance*, but *Enable*; and
when we are Enabled, we may do that
for which he doth Enable us. We may
Hear the Voice of God, if God speaks
to us; and we may Obey and Comply
with his Motion. I will give you some
Instances in Scripture for this, *Isai. 41. 2.*
God there is said, *To call the Righteous
Man to his foot.* The Righteous Man
here spoken of was *Abraham*, whom
God called to follow him, Step by Step.
And the Apostle, *Heb. 11.* gives us an
account of this in practice, who Obeyed
God's call, and *went* at his bidding,
not knowing whither.

Another Instance you have of the
Disciples of our Saviour, of whom we
read that when our Saviour called them, Matt. 4. 18.
there was that Virtue, Power, and Suf-
ficiency in the Voice of our Saviour,
that they left their Relations, and Em-
ployments, and followed our Saviour,
without making any Question how they
should be maintained. The Inferiour
Creatures they have Obeyed God con-
trary to the very Impressions upon their
Natures. The *Sun* hath left his Course Josh. 10.
and stood still, at God's bidding: Fire 12, 13.
hath

Vol. I. hath not burnt, and the Sea hath risen
 up in heaps, and the several Creatures,
 though never so opposite in their Na-
 tures, one unto another, came into the
 Ark; and though before they would
 have Destroy'd one another, yet being
 called by God to go into the Ark, they
 became tame and harmless. So that not
 only Intelligent but Inferior Agents,
 know how to obey God, if God appear.
 Much rather should Intelligent Agents,
 who are adapted to hear God's Voice,
 and to be guided by Reason, answer
 the call of God, when He speaks to
 them.

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DISCOURSE XIII.

The Conversion of a Sinner.

E Z E K. xviii. 27.

When the wicked Man turneth away from his Wickedness that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his Soul alive.

THESE are Words not in vain; there-Disc. XIII.
fore they do suppose two things. ~~~~~

I. That the Wicked *ought* to Reform:
And,

II. That they *may*.

I. They that have committed Wick-
edness *ought* to disclaim it, repent,
Y leave

Vol. I. leave off to sin, and return to their Duty.
 ~~~~~ And,

II. That they *may*; else it might be replied to these Words; *God supposeth that which cannot be done*: and this every where passeth for an undeniable Answer. And to suppose this, is a Defect in any wise Agent: much more in the All-wise God, who never makes a vain shew. It is not only below Him, but unworthy of him, to Deride Men in misery; when he calls upon them to Repent and Turn to Him. True indeed, if Men will not hear his Voice, then He will *laugh at their destruction*, and *mock when their fear cometh upon them*. As therefore we may not make a mock of Sin, neither doth God mock at Sinners. But to make this out, that the wicked *may* turn from their wickedness.

In every Nature, there are Two things as the Provision of God's Creation, and its Security, *viz.*

1. A Principle of *Self-preservation*.
2. A motion of *Restitution* and Recovery.

*1st.* A Principle of *Self-preservation* in its true proper and natural State: from which of it self it doth never de-  
 part;

part ; but by the violence of other Agents, which it cannot resist ; and therefore is sometimes driven from it self. This is the Account that some give of Storms, Tempests Earthquakes, and the like. But Natures motion is orderly and leisurely ; as the several Seasons of the Year, that follow one another : where the former give place unto the latter. This is the first Principle in Nature : And the

2d. Is a power of *Recovery*, and Self-Restoration, when that which did disturb is taken off. Thence it is, That we expect fair weather after foul ; serene, after stormy ; and clear, after Clouds. This is an Observation from the State of the Creation, Things without us or about us.

Now, is there any Perfection in the *lower Nature*, that is not in the *higher* ? Therefore we are to suppose that this is eminently in superiour Nature. Now to bring this Observation home to our purpose. To a moral Agent, such as Man is ; he being endowed with Reason and Understanding, and invested with Liberty and Freedom : nothing is more Unnatural than Sin and Wickedness. For it is



against the Reason of our Mind, and against the Reason of the Thing. It is a Contradiction to the *Reason of our Mind*, which is our Governour ; that which guides the Actions of our Will : and to the *Reason of Things*, which gives Law, and is the Rule of Action : And wickedness is a great contradiction to both. Wickedness in Man is as Monstrous and unnatural, as Darknes in the Sun, which is the Luminary of the World : Wickedness is such a Thing as Filth in the Water ; as Infection in the Air : Wickedness is such a Thing as a Disease in the Constitution of Nature, and we say Nature is every Man's best Physician. What are Agues and Feavers but Nature charged with an Enemy that tends to its dissolution, and therefore labours to shake it off ? And therefore Physicians endeavour to help and assist Nature, and put her into motion ; by which, she will discharge her self of all malignant and offensive matter. Now, I say, shall Nature recover, and shall not Grace superadded to Nature, do the like ? we use to say of all Habits joyned to Natural Powers, that they do Facilitate ; and we easily do that, which we do by the help of acquired Habits.

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Habits. Now the first thing in Rational Nature is not at all to Vary from the Rule of Right : and this would be to answer the constitution of God's Creation, in Man. But in case he fails : here, in the Second place, is the Motion of Repentance ; and herein lyes our double Security, Safety and Perfection. It is therefore highly necessary, that we be always in a disposition towards Repentance, and free to the exercise of Faith in God, by Jesus Christ : that so the Guilt of no Sin may lye upon our Consciences : for this is the Motion of Recovery, in humane Nature.

So that now put the Case of us Men as we find it. Our Consciences will tell us, that we have done amiss, by departing from the Rule of Right ; and by consenting to Iniquity : for Guilt is burthensome to the Mind, and will be a wound in our Spirits. Now if the *first*, which is best, fail, *viz.* our *Innocence*, and *Integrity*, wherewith we were invested in the moment of our Creation : Let us betake our selves to the *second*, the motion of *Repentance* ; which is for our Recovery, and is the Grace of the Gospel : and in so doing, there will be hope, as we read *Ezra* 10. 2. And

Vol. I. let us not lose our selves, by adding iniquity to our Sin, or by Despair after Guilt contracted. For a second Sin, is not only another of the same kind, but the Consummation of the former : Infomuch, that he is reputed to do the same evil once again, that he hath once done and doth nor Repent of it. Let us not live in a Lye, flatter our selves with that which will not profit : for there are in Man many Lying Refuges, and foolish Boastings, and vain Glory. The

Phil. 3. 19. Apostle tells us of some, that *glory in their shame* ; that do Applaud themselves, as if they were not under the Obligation of Judgment, and Conscience; but were free to do any Thing, that is either pleasurable, or profitable, or expedient for their purpose, or what they have a Mind to do. For of some we say, there is *no fear of God before their eyes* ; no Reverence of the Deity in their Minds; but are free to their ungoverned Wills, and to their Lusts; whereas this is worthy of Human Nature, to overcome a Man's own Will, and to bridle his Lusts. For *Will is no Rule*, nor can justifie any thing ; and Lusts are very importunate, *Jam. 4. 1. Whence come wars and fightings? come they*

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Pro. 16. 32.

*not hence, even from your Lusts that war in the Soul ?* Whereas he that Ruleth his own Spirit, doth a greater Act *than he* which taketh a City : Nothing is the true Improvement of the Rational Faculties but the exercise of the several Virtues, of Sobriety, Temperance, Chastity, Modesty, Gentleness, Humility, Obedience in all things to God, and Charity and good will to Men. These are Acts of Excellency, these are indeed Acts of Power, by these the Minds of Men are Regulated, and Refined, discharged of Fury, Rage and exorbitant Passions. By these a Man is made to act *like himself* : whereas, without these, a Man acts like a Person in a Frensy, distracted and mad, like Savage People, or like Beasts of prey, that worry and destroy one another : whereas by Moderate Use of the Conveniences of Nature ; by Modesty, Humility, Gentleness ; by Patience and Obedience to God ; by Charity, Love and good will towards Men, a Man is Qualified for the Enjoyment of God, and reconciled to the Law of Heaven, the Rule of Righteousness ; and fitted for attendance upon God in the other State, and to enjoy Him for ever.

Y 4

Now



Vol. I.

---Ingenuus  
didicisse  
fideliter  
Artes,  
Emollit  
mores, nec  
finit esse  
feros.  
Ovid.

Now, if it may be said of Common Education, viz. of Learning, and the Study of the *Liberal Sciences*, That it doth qualify and calm the Minds of Men, and bring them to Gentleness and Sobriety; upon which Supposition the Roman Emperours that were such great Warriours, did forbid the Study of Philosophy, because it spoiled Men for Soldiers: I say, if this be true of common Education, how much more of *Christian Graces*, by which we are taught to Imitate Christ, who was Meek, and Lowly in Spirit. 'Tis in the exercise of these Vertues, that a Man shews his Strength and Valour, above the inferior Creation. Whereas on the contrary, by Envy, Wrath, Pride, and Haughtiness, Men become Devilish: But by doing Good, Men resemble God. By the several Vertues, the Mind is Purified, and made fit to converse with God, and to Receive from him: and therefore it is said by the Prophet, Isa. 1. 16, 18. *Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well. Come now let us Reason together, saith the Lord.* Wherefore, I say with the Apostle, Eph. 5. 14. *Awake thou that sleepest,*

and

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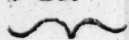
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*and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee Life.* Disc. XIII.  
Awake all you that have fallen asleep, in the Security of sinful Pleasures, and through neglect of God, and your Duty : and this is my Argument ; and the Force of my Exhortation ; *Christ is ready to give you Life.*

And if I had not good Warrant to say this, there would be no Force in my Exhortation ; and I should then labour in vain. Whereas being satisfied that *God is in this Exhortation*, and ready to assist all good endeavours with his Aid, Help, and Assistance ; This gives great Encouragement, and speaks to all Points, and answers all Objections to the contrary. Here is then an Exhortation in the *name of God* ; otherwise were it only the Voice of a Man, it would produce no good effect.

But this I take for granted, that where there is Monitions and Warning from God in case of Danger ; that there the Man *is able*, or that God is ready to *make him so*. And if you do not suppose this, all those Exhortations in Scripture for Men to leave their Sins, and to repent, and turn to God, which are so frequent, are to no purpose, unless Men be able, or that God is ready by his  
Grace

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*His Original  
and  
Blessing.*

Grace to make them so. I say, all those Exhortations do suppose necessary Aid and Assistance. And the Apostle, *Heb. 4. 16.* hath an excellent Form of Words to this purpose, though it be not so plain in our Translation; for we read it, *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need:* whereas in the Original it is, *Grace for a necessary supply.*

Now this is all that I have aimed at to prove; not only that God is ready to receive us, if we repent and turn unto him; but also willing to Aid and assist us. Therefore depend upon this, as that which you may trust unto; for without this, neither our Religion nor our Safety have any great Security: If God, for his part, be not willing and ready to afford necessary Aid and Assistance. But that you may believe this, I can give you all the assurance of Reason and Scripture. Yea, survey the *whole Creation of God*, and you shall find that God hath provided for all necessary Effects. Hath he not secured the World, for Light and Heat, by the Sun? doth the Sun fail, after so many thousand Years, to give Light and

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Disc. XIII.

and Warmth, any more than it did at first? This is the promise of God, to secure the necessary Effect to the preservation of the several Creatures. Hath not God provided the Clouds of Heaven to drop down Fatness, and to send Rain to wet the Earth, that otherwise would be spoiled with Heat and Dust; I might run through the whole Creation, and shew how every thing is fitted for our use, and to secure the Effects that are necessary and proper for us.

But I go on. No considerate Mind, that is privy to its own Slipperiness, dare be self-confident. He that is sensible of his own Irresolution, and sudden surprisal through Temptation, together with his Weakness, is so far from being self-confident, or from trusting to his own Strength, that if he should leave God out, he would soon give over and sink down into Despair; and not think himself sufficient to manage so great an Affair, as the things of Reason, and the Transactions of Time, and Preparations for Eternity. We are always to understand, and to remember, that we are but second Causes, and have sufficiency only in God, who is First and Principal  
in



Vol. I. in every thing that Good is; and if God  
 ~~~~~ be with us, we are enabled.

Wherefore be resolved in this matter, that *God is with us*, and that he is ready to afford his Grace and Assistance. And this is a thing of universal Acknowledgment. For all sober and considerate Men, when they do engage in any thing considerable, they say, *In the Name of God*; and when they part with one another, they say, *God be with you*. Let us therefore in every thing begin with God, which is to follow the Direction of our blessed Saviour, *Luk. 14. 28.* Who saith, *Which of you intending to build a Tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it. Or who is he that will go forth to war against a great and potent Enemy, that doth not first sit down and consider, whether he be able to meet him.*

Now that you may not lose this great Argument and Principle of Reformation, and true and solid Ground of Encouragement, to leave off to sin, and to return to God, because of his Gracious Aid and Assistance, I will give you Assurance farther by these six Particulars.

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First, It was *never* God's Intention when he made Man at first, to put him into a State of absolute *Independency*, or *Self-sufficiency*. And therefore whosoever assumes it to himself, doth assume that which never did belong to a Creature-State. God always did intend, that his Creature should depend upon him, and hold of him : For Man was made but in the place and order of a Second Cause, and a Second Cause is no Cause divided from the First. Therefore it was always the Report of Wisdom, *Acknowledge God in all thy ways ; and lean not to thine own Understanding.* This was a Duty of *Adam* in *Paradice*, even while he continued in *Innocency* ; before ever he meddled with the forbidden Fruit ; and he miscarried, because he did forget his Dependence upon God, and withdrew himself from him. Those Words of the Psalmist, *Psf. 37. 5. Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in him,* are not Directions only for this lapsed State : These are Directions suitable and connatural to the very first Institution of God. As also that of the Prophet, *Isai. 50. 10. Trust in the Lord, and stay thy self upon thy God,* and as he there goes on most excellently,

v. 11.

Vol. I. v. II. Behold all ye that kindle a Fire, that compass your selves about with Sparks that you have kindled. but this shall you have at my hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow. They are sure enough to fail and be disappointed in their Undertaking, be it never so good, they will end in Sorrow and Shame, if they do not begin with God, and look up to him, as the only Self-sufficient Cause. For alas! *none of us are wise enough for our own Direction*, in any of the ordinary Affairs of Life, or able enough for our own Defence: We do not see before us, nor understand what Evils may befall us. If we walk in the Streets, we are not sure of one another; for he that despises God or the Laws, may be Master of any Man's Life. So that if we leave out God, or God be neglected, we shall be frustrated and disappointed; and then we may justly reflect upon our own Presumption and Folly. For we went out in our own Strength, and God was not in all our Thoughts; and therefore he doth not give Issue and Success. This was the State of the Creation, the Creatures Reference to God, and the Creators Influence upon the Creature, and Communication of himself

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himself to him. And that which was not in the State of Innocence, cannot be supposed to be in the State of Weakness, and contracted Impotency and Debility. Yea, to tell you of a Self-sufficient Creature, is a contradiction *in Subjecto*; for all things derive from their Original, and refer thereunto. As Solomon hath observed, *the place from whence the Waters come, thither they do return*. This is a Reason beyond all contradiction. I could Triumph in this Argument; 'tis without all possibility of answer or evasion. Therefore there is an absolute Insufficiency in every Second Cause; and what is a Second Cause, is applied without effect, when the First Cause is absent, or doth not move. This is the First. But,

Secondly, Could Man alledge either *Necessity* of Evil, or *Impossibility* of doing Good, it would be a Plea, when God calls us to an Account, and admits us to Reason with him. For the Scripture tells us, that God doth do so, not only at the *day of Judgment*, but even *now*; and every one hath heard the Voice of God calling upon him, to give a Reason of his Actions. *Come now* (saith the Prophet in the Name of God)

Disc. XIII.

Bonus Vir

sine Deo ne-

mo est. Sen.

Nulla sine

Deo Mens

bona est.

Sen. Ep.

Ecc. i. 7.

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Isai. 1. 18.

Isai. 5. 4.

God) *let us Reason together*, and argue the Case, and I will let you judge between me and your selves, *What could I have done more to my Vineyard than I have done?* But what have you done answerable? But if Sin were necessary, it could not be avoided; and if a Man's Duty were impossible, it could not be done; this would be an Answer to God himself. But, that there is no necessity of Evil, or any Impossibility of doing Good, and becoming Vertuous, I will shew you from that Passage of our Saviour, *Matth. 12. 41.* who saith to that wicked Generation, *That if the mighty works that had been done among them, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented.* Which shews, that there was no impossibility in the Matter, but that it might have been done; otherwise this Speech of our Saviour had been vain, and to no purpose. Upon this account it is, that we read, *Jude 15.* That at the day of Judgment God will *convince all the ungodly*, and challenge them for *all their hard Speeches, and ungodly Deeds, that they have committed;* and shew, that they had no reason, either to speak or think hardly of him; so that
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if ~~this~~ could be made out, that it were absolutely impossible to avoid Evil, and to do Good, and discharge our Duty; *this* would be an Answer to the Indictment, that might be brought against us at the last day of Judgment. For *necessaries* cannot be otherwise than they are; nor that which is *impossible*, otherwise than it is. So that before any Judgment of Condemnation pass from a Righteous Judge; it must appear, that neither any one was necessarily Wicked; nor was it impossible, to have been Virtuous. Therefore these things will appear otherwise, or Men will not Condemn themselves, nor justify God in his Dealings. And doth not our Saviour plainly intimate this, when He tells you, that *Coraizin* and *Bethsaida*, as they *ought* to have repented, so they *might* have done it; and others *would* have done it upon the like means, as hath been already said. It is true of Sinners, what *Saul* said of himself, *1 Sam. 13. 12. I forced my self*; when he did that which he ought not to have done. So it will be found of all Sinners, that they have done that which was *Unnatural* and against the Reason of their Minds; which had they fol-

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lowed.

Vol. I. lowed, they would not have been
 ~~~~~ Wicked.

Thirdly, Where there is *Excellency of Nature*, there is always Readiness to communicate, supply and gratifie. We commonly say, 'tis *not Majesty without Goodness*: All Excellency is easie to give Allowance, to shew Grace and Favour.

*Primus est A good disposed Man, saith Aristotle, is ready to make a candid Interpretation, and overlook an Injury; and it is more generous not to take cognizance of a Fault, than to Forgive. It is God-like to Pardon, to Gratifie, to do Good. In Case of Misery, it belongs to Goodness, to make a Supply. They think meanly of God, that think he doth less to recover his Creature, than doth consist with Infinite Clemency and Compassion; that God doth less than what might serve the turn, or that he is wanting in Necessaries, to save his Creatures Harmless, or bring them to Good. This I depend upon, in a way of Reason; that infinite Goodness will not do less than is necessary, or than will serve the turn. But then, as Reason speaks, so also doth God speak of himself, by those Impressions he hath made of himself, upon all*  
 Creatures.

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 Sen. Ep. 95.*

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Creatures. For all Creatures that are *Original* to any other, they have this in them, to take care of their Young, and to watch over them, till they are able to make their own Defence and Supply. This is true throughout the *whole Creation* of God; and hear what God hath said of himself, *Psal. 145. 9. God is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.* Therefore I will rather think, *That God did not make the World, than that He will fail to be very good unto the Creatures that he hath made.* For I see it otherwise quite otherwise.

Farthermore, we find good Affection every where Recommended, and the contrary every where Blamed and Disparaged. We admire Goodness, Tenderness, and Compassion; but on the contrary, every body complains of Envy, Malice, Hard-heartedness, Cruelty. We therefore may be sure, that Goodness cannot be wanting in God, the want whereof God blames in his Creatures.

*Fouthly,* We cannot say worse of God, than that his Calls and Monitions to his Creatures, are not serious, and in good earnest, and out of Love and good



Vol. I. Mind. I can make no other Explication of that Distinction of God's *Secret and Revealed Will*, but that they do declare the self *same Will* in God ; but it is his Secret Will, before he hath declared it: and his Revealed Will, when he hath made it known. Just as the Secrets of a Man, knoweth no Man, but himself, and he to whom he will reveal them : So the Will of God is not known, till God himself declare it. For to speak of a Secret and a Revealed Will in God, contrary one unto another, is without Warrant, for it is the *same Will in another State*. And this I am well assured and resolved of, because this would be Dishonesty here below in the very Judgment of Reason, to Pretend and not to Intend ; to make a Shew and Overture, and to resolve in a Man's Mind the contrary, is a great Dishonesty, in the Judgment of Reason. And we have no other Principle to discern the Nature of God by than the Light of Reason ; and therefore the Prophet saith, *Isai. 46. 8. Shew your selves to be Men ;* that is, use your Reason, and he speaks it in this case, of judging in the ways and things of God. *To whom, saith He,*

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*The Conversion of a Sinner.*

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*will you liken me, and make me equal?* Disc. XIII.

Will you compare me with your Idols? that are made of Silver and Gold, and carried upon Mens Shoulders, and set in a place from whence they cannot remove; and though one cry unto them yet cannot they answer, nor save themselves out of trouble. *Remember this, and shew your selves Men, bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors.* Wherefore we cannot think that to be a Perfection above, which is base and an Imperfection below. For those things that are true, are eternal Truths, always were so, and will be so Immutably and unalterably. And upon this account, it is very hard to think of God that He will not contribute that which is Necessary to his Creature, to do that which he calls him unto; especially in such things, where the Creature is Undone, if the thing be not done; and where none else but God can do it, nor help any otherwhere to be found. In such case how can we make it out, which is declared of God; *that He would not the Death of a Sinner*; if he do not that which is necessary, to bring him to Repentance and unto Life? We are told, *Wisd. 11. 24.* that *He*  
L 3 *hateth*

Vol. I. *hateth nothing that he made ; but is the*  
 ~~~~~ Lover of Souls. And therefore he cannot be wanting in necessities, to save them Harmless, and to bring them to Good. And this Acknowledgment is made in our Publick Prayers : And upon this account it is, that we are advised, to *cast away our transgressions, and to make us clean hearts ;* and thus expostulated withal, *for why will you die ?* Ezek. 18. 31--33, 11--36, 33. &c. *Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die, or in the death of him that dieth ? wherefore turn and live.* And it is very observable, that he which Bids us do these Works, hath also Promised, that he will work them in us, Ezek. 36. 26. *I will sprinkle clean water upon you , and you shall be clean ; and a new heart will I give you, and I will put my Spirit upon you,* Jer. 32. 39. and Heb. 8. 10. Now these places are very easily Reconciled, by acknowledging God's Superintendency, as the Original and First Cause ; and Mens Labour , Care, and Diligence, as a Second Cause. So that it may be said, that Man doth it, as we attribute an Effect to an Instrument : and it must be acknowledged, that God doth it, because He is Chief  
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and Principal. We read *Jonah* 4. 2. That God is said to be a God of great pity : and elsewhere, we read that he Delighteth in Mercy ; and what Persons Delight in, they do easily and readily. Farther , let it be considered, that the Fault is laid upon us, and we are charged with carelesness and self-neglect, if the thing be not done. *Prov.* 1. 31. *I have called but ye refused, and would have none of my Counsels.* So *Hosea* 13. 9. *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thy self :* and *Joh.* 6. 40. *ye will not come to me, that ye might have Life.* This is the fourth particular.

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DISCOURSE XIV.

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E Z E K. xviii. 27.

When the wicked Man turneth away from his Wickedness that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his Soul alive.

F*ifthly*, To assert our Impotency and Disc. XIV. Disability, and that God is wanting in necessary Assistance, is to expose us to an invincible *Temptation*; and that in these three Particulars.

1st. To entertain *hard Thoughts of God*, and such as are unworthy of him.

2^{ly}. To *throw off the Use of all Means*, and to take no care at all in this great Affair.

3^{ly}.

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3^{ly}. Finally, to *Despair*. And we wrong God more by Desperation than by Presumption. I say, to Affert our Inability, and that God is wanting in necessary Aid and Assistance, would be to expose us to think the *hardest Thoughts* imaginable of God; even so far, as to neglect and throw off the Use of all *Means*, and to final Desperation. For what are Means if the End be not attained by them? Means are not valuable for themselves, nor will any body be at the Charge of them, but in respect of the End. And whose Heart will serve him to Act, when he hath no manner of Hope? and who can have any Hope if he have no Confidence, that God will aid and assist? I add farther; to think that God is Implacable, and Irreconcilable, is the way to come unto the very Temper of the Devils themselves, but that God is ready with his Grace, and Influence, is that which hath an universal Acknowledgment; as appears from these three things.

1st. There is not a Man among us of any Sense and Reason, that will Engage in any matter of weight, but he will say, *In the Name of God*.

2^{ly}.

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2ly. There is no Man of any Sobriety, if he Relate how he hath escaped any danger ; but he will interpose these words, *God be thanked*, Or, *as God would have it*.

3ly. All Men of Consideration, and Sobriety ; when they part, will say, *God be with you*. Which Observations import, that it is suitable, and connatural to the Nature of Man, to Apply to God, and to acknowledge him, and to think that God will be with us, to assist and direct us.

Sixthly and Lastly, God hath done *so much* on His part, that he hath given us all Reason to believe, and think that He is well-minded towards us : and that he is resolved in the matter of our Recovery ; upon Terms, that are made easy, and possible. And to make this appear I will offer you these Eight Particulars.

First, Take into consideration, the length of God's *Patience* : For were God for our Destruction, he would take us at the first advantage, and opportunity ; as Enemies are wont to do. For who lets an Enemy go out of his Hand ? Men will hardly suffer an Enemy to live ; but prevail against him
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Vol. I.

what they can ; lest, if they should let him go out of their Hand, and let him alone, he should meditate their Destruction. And this is that, which is apparent ; and the Scripture supposes it, *Eccl. 8. 7. Because sentence against an Evil work is not speedily executed, therefore the hearts of the Sons of Men are set in them to do Evil.* But *2 Pet. 3. 9.* we are told, that *the Long-suffering of God* doth not proceed either from his Weakness, or want of Power, but from his *Willingness that we should not perish.* He would have us come to a better understanding, and take a course that we might live. This is the first thing that I would suggest, that God is well-minded towards us, and willing to do us good. The

Second thing that I would offer, is, *The checks of our own Consciences.* Now the checks of our own Consciences, in all bad ways, we have very great cause to attribute them unto God, as his Awakenings of us. And that for this Reason, because sinning doth contract Hardness and Reprobacy of Mind ; and disables the Mind for its true and proper work ; and makes it as Salt that hath lost its Saviour. *We all find it far easier, to com-*

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mit a second Sin than the first. Therefore we are to look upon the check of our own Consciences as the voice of God.

Thirdly, The abundant Provision, that God hath made for our Recovery, shews that he is in good earnest. There is Expiation of Sin; and the Assistance of his Grace and Spirit, for the recovering of us; and God would not have done all this, if he had not been in good earnest. Here, I will take up the Argument of *Manoah's Wife*, *Judges 13. 22. we shall surely die* (said he) *because we have seen God.* But his Wife said unto him, v. 23. *If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt-offering at our hand, nor shewn us such things as he hath done.* 'Tis not reasonable to think, that God having made a large Provision for our Relief and Recovery; that he should lay a Restraint upon the Sovereign Vertue of that, which is his own Remedy; but suffer it to grapple with the Malignancy of the Distemper, though it extend never so far. So that if a good Effect doth not follow, it is not because God hath been Wanting on his part, nor because he hath not done that which lay upon him to do. If such a remedy prove

Vol. I. prove ineffectual, it must be from some other cause *viz.* from some Obstacle, or Impediment, or want of due Application : or because of the Persons Impatience under cure, or because things are allowed and delighted in, that are of a contrary Nature, and Quality ; and not for want of Good will in the All-wise God. For the means that God useth, are in themselves sufficient, and in case they prove without Effect, 'tis because they are not followed.

Men fall short in their Repentance, because after Men have been Sorrowful, they return again to their former Iniquities. Whereas upon Repentance there should follow *Works meet for Repentance*, Mat. 3. 8. 'Tis an excellent saying that which you find in *Ecclus. 34. 26.* *He that washeth himself because he hath touched a dead Body, and goeth and toucheth it again, what doth his washing profit him? So he that humbleth himself for his Sins and doth the same things again, what doth his humbling profit him?*

So again, for *Faith*, which is another Remedy of God's Provision ; for he saith, *He that Believeth shall be Saved.* Now what doth a Man's Faith signifie,
if

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if a Man profess to believe; if he do not do those things which naturally follow upon such a belief; or as they do, who do really and truly believe; What profit can a Man expect from such an empty and insignificant Faith, as S. James speaks, *Jam. 2. 14. Can such a Faith save him?* Who will think that a Man doth believe, who doth things clear contrary to that which he saith he believes? Again:

What come the offers of Grace unto, which shew the Favour of God towards Sinners; if they be not closed with, or if Men *Receive the Grace of God in vain?* What doth all this signifie, if that complaint of the Prophet may be taken up, *that we have laboured in vain, and spent our strength in vain.* To what purpose are those Prophets sent by God, *that rise up early, and sit up late, if Men incline not their Ears, and will not listen?* Jer. 25. 4. Then in respect of the Sinners State and Condition; Can he be otherwise than extreamly miserable, that is not cured of the Rancor and Venom that the Practice of Iniquity hath poisoned his Spirit withal? For Misery ariseth from within; 'tis not by any Imposition from the Effects of any Power without us: But a Man is miserable from
his

Vol. I his own inward Malignity and naughty
 ~~~~~ Disposition. So that if a Man be not  
 Cured by all the Remedies that are ap-  
 plied, he is not healed of the Wound  
 that Guilt and Sin hath made in his  
 Conscience; which are the true pro-  
 ductive Cause of his Malady and Distem-  
 per. And if this Effect be not wrought,  
 it is because the Patient is Refractory  
 and Stubborn. And that is the third  
 thing, *viz.* those *Provisions* that God  
 hath made which are worthy, honou-  
 rable, noble, available and effectual, if  
 we do not obstruct and hinder; but are  
 patient under God's Cure, and Applica-  
 tion of the Remedy. The

*Fourth* thing that I shall Instance in,  
 is the *Nature and Quality of the Things*  
 that God, upon account of Religion,  
 does require of us, *viz.* Those things  
 whereof Religion doth consist: and they  
 are internal good Dispositions and Acts  
 that are suitable, and do of their own  
 accord follow. I say, an *Internal good*  
*Disposition*, and such Acts as are suitable  
 and connatural thereunto, and follow  
 of their own accord. For by our Car-  
 riage and Behaviour, by our Words and  
 Speech, we shew our Mind and Temper;  
 by what we do, and practise. In our  
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ledgment to God, that *his service is perfect Freedom*; and we are bid, *Gal. 5. 1. To stand fast with that Liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.* And the Gospel is called the *Royal Law of Liberty*, *Jam. 2. 8.* For the Christian State is not as the *Jewish*; the Apostles did not think fit to lay any such Burthens upon Believers, as were in the *Jewish State*; for that is called, *Act. 15. 10. A Yoke which neither they nor their Fathers were able to bear.* Such things were imposed upon them, as had Goodness only as they were warranted, and enjoyned by him that had Power. But all Acts in the Christian Religion, have an *Intrinsic Goodness*, and in their own Nature are Sannatory and Desirable: and this speaks *honourably* of the Christian Religion; that whatsoever it lays upon us, or enjoyns, is either good in it self, or for the Society, or for Recovery in case of failing and Miscarriage. They are either *Operative* to such an Estate as is good, or *Conservative* of Men in such a State, or *Prohibitive* of the contrary. They are either for our Security in a Good Estate, or for Recovery out of a Bad one: They are such things as

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Vol. I. are Good in themselves, and do Sanctifie and Purifie our Minds, and make us Right and Sound, and such as we ought to be. I might Instance in all the Acts required by the Christian Religion, and make it good of every one of them ; which cannot be said of positive Institution, such as was the Prohibition to *Adam* and *Eve*, *Gen* 2. 17. *Not to eat of such a Tree*. Neither do we take notice of any such Prohibition in the Gospel : but what we find pleasurable or convenient, *1 Cor.* 10. 25, 27. *we eat, asking no Question for Conscience sake*. All those Prohibitions that were under the *Levitical Law*, for neglect whereof, the Sons of *Aaron* were so punished as also *Uzzah*, for touching the Ark ; though with a good Mind to keep it from falling ; and the *Bethshemites* for looking into it. There are now no such things required, so hazardous and dangerous : for such things Men had not the Security of their Minds but their Security lay only in their *Memories*, and not in the Rectitude of their *Temper*. Whereas we have the Security of our Temper, because those things that are forbidden, are Base and Unworthy. So that when Evil is presented

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ted to us, we presently give an Answer, *Disc. XIV.*

*How can I do this wickedness and sin against God?* And out of a Sense of the Impurity of the thing, we presently Object against it. Whereas they had only the security of their Memories, which is a frail, and fallible Faculty; for we are apt to forget, and do not often think. And this we find, that it is far harder for Intellectual Nature to do a thing where we see no Reason for it, or to forbear any thing, if we do not see any Reason why; especially if it be against our Way and Temper. But in the Christian Religion, those things that are Commanded, are regular and kindly, because our Minds are cast into the same Mould with them, and framed into Suitableness and Conformity with them: So that we act our selves, without any great Consideration; we are ready to make Application to God, and to place all Affiance and Confidence in him; and to do all Acts of Righteousness and Justice; and to govern our selves according to the Rules of Sobriety and Temperance; because we are Reconciled in Nature and Temper, to all these things: So that it is an easie thing to be Religious, upon

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Vol. I. the Terms of Christianity. We worship

God readily, because we are in Temper, God-Ilike, according to our Measure and Degree. Senecca saith, "If a Man

*Vis Deus propitiare?* " would be Holy and Righteous, let him

*Bonus esto.* " imitate God; and if a Man do partake

*Satis illos coluit, quis-* " of God he is such, and will be such.

*quis imita-* But why should I quote the Philosopher,

*tus est. Sen.* since the Apostle saith, we *partake of the*

*Ep. 95.* *divine Nature*, by a Principle of Holiness and Righteousness, 2 Pet. 2. 4. This

is the *Fourth* thing, the Nature and *Quality of those things that God doth require of us.*

*Fifthly*, The *equal Consideration* that we meet with at the Hands of God, in respect of our present Weakness, shews that God is ready and willing to do us good. And to make this out, I say, that if any Man suffer Difficulty in the discharge of his Duty (as I must confess several Tempers do, more or less, as to particular Vertues; to some Tempers, such Acts of Vertue are very easie, that to others are more hard and difficult. Now in this Disparity) if by Consideration, Reason and Argument a Man bring himself to that which is to be done, God accepts it the rather as an Act of *high Vertue*, and true Goodness.

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ness. And the more of Difficulty a Man finds in himself, God looks upon it as done with more Resolution ; and he will not reject it ; because the Man suffered *Difficulty* ; but look upon it as the more *eminently Vertuous* ; notwithstanding such Indisposition and Avocation. Now this is the fairest Measure imaginable : God doth make Allowance for our Temper, Complexion, and Constitution ; for our Prejudices from our Education, and Suppositions upon Mistakes, and for our former Converse and Acquaintance, which many times doth occasion some Difficulty in the Discharge of our Duty. For *he considers our frame, and as a Father pitieth his Children, so the Lord pitieth those that fear him*, Psal. 103. 13. And this is a great Encouragement to us, that we shall meet with all fair Construction ; and that we are upon good Terms with God. And as this is for our Encouragement, so doth it declare God's gracious Intentions towards us, and that He is in good earnest desirous to do us good, and That He will not be Severe with us. That he will neither neglect nor refuse any Good in us ; for He will not destroy any thing that par-

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Disc. XIV.



Vol. I. takes of his own Nature ; but will foster  
 and cherish any thing that is God-like.  
 And for our Mistakes, so our Hearts be  
 Right, God will mend them, by his own  
 candid Construction, and gracious In-  
 terpretation. And this Measure *Abime-  
 lech* found, *Gen. 20. 6. I know that thou  
 didst it in the Integrity of thy Heart.*  
 Though he was to blame in the matter,  
 yet because he was Right in the main,  
 God overlooks his Fault. For, if we  
 do not consent, the Action is not  
 reckoned as Ours. As on the one Hand,  
 it is no Vertue to do well without an  
 Intention : So on the other, 'tis not  
 reckoned as our Sin, if we fail through  
 Mistake. I add to this, that there is  
 great Congruity between our own Be-  
 ing and the Nature of Things enjoyn-  
 ed by Religion. The Apostle saith,  
*Rom. 7. 15. I consent to the Law that  
 it is good :* Here is the Congruity of the  
*Agent* and the *Object*. And *David* saith,  
*Psal. 119, 142. Thy Law is Truth :* That  
 is, it is such as it should be. *David*  
 was Reconciled in Temper, to the Law  
 of God. To the same degree that we  
 are endued with *Holiness*, to the same  
 degree we are possess of *Happiness*. The  
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lency of the part ; for Mind is ten thousand to one above Body : And also, in respect of the *Act* that is performed ; what is done with the consent of the Mind is best done. What Men do against their Minds, is of no Value, though the thing done be Good in it self ; nor of any deep Malignity, if done with a good Mind, though through Mistake. Not only the gracious God, but all good Men go by this Rule ; they do not value things as they are *materially* considered, but by the *Mind* and *Intention* of the Party ; not that which is done, but what was *meant* and intended. If it prove an Injury, a good Man will accept of the good Intention ; and that is the *Fifth* Particular.

*Sixthly.* Though God begin with less, He *will go on* with more. For this I dare say, If a Man be Serious in his Religion, and duly sensible of his own Vanity and Insufficiency ; and of the many Avocations, and Temptations from abroad ; the Grace of God will not be short. Though God doth not give all at first, yet that which God Begins withal, is Sufficient for something, in the way of Conversion ; and thereby



Vol. I. Man is enabled to do that for which  
 ~~~~~ that Assistance is given. And that being  
 made use of ; God , of his own Grace
 and good Will, will give *more*. And
 this we are well assured of by those
 words of our Saviour, *Mark 4. 25. To
 him that hath shall be given, (That is,
 that hath by Use, and Improvement ;) but from him that hath not (that is,
 that doth not make Use of what God
 hath given him) shall be taken away,
 even that which he hath.* But this is most
 certain that *God doth never forsake us first.*
 That good will of God which did in-
 cline him to Begin with us, when we
 were in a way of Sin ; will move him
 to go on after he hath begun. For we
 find in Scripture, that God often *makes
 himself, an Argument to himself.* *Ezek. 37.
 35. For my own Name sake I will do this.*
*So Isa. 43. 25. I, even I am he that blot-
 teth out thy transgressions for my own
 names sake.* God here proposeth him-
 self, for an Argument to himself ; and
 brings this as an Argument for a *far-
 ther Act*, because of his own Grace and
 Goodness he had *begun*. For he will
 not begin, and leave off upon the same
 Terms he did begin, when we were in
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mies to him by wicked Works. He did Begin then, when he found us in our Blood. It is easy for us to believe that God, who of his own accord did Begin, when he found us in a *State of Sin*, will not give over and leave us, when he finds us in the Motion of *Repentance*. And that is the *Sixth* particular, Tho' God *begin with less*, he *will go on with more*. And this is a great Encouragement for any Man to set about the Work of Religion, and to make Application to God; because he does not know how far God will enable him in time to come. Just as our Saviour said' to his Disciples, *when you shall be brought before Princes and Governours, consider not before hand, what ye shall Answer; for it shall be given yon in that hour, what ye shall say*, Mat. 10. 18, 19. So that, let no Man be Discourag'd, though that which he now hath, be not sufficient for to carry him through that which he hath before him: For as his Work shall increase and grow greater, God will furnish him with that Assistance that shall be suitable, and sufficient for what he calls him unto.

Seventhly, God speaketh absolutely, positively, and without any Reservation; that

Vol. I. that when a Sinner *turneth away from his Wickedness, he shall save his Soul alive.*

When we have but half a Mind, We Speak with Caution, Reservation, and upon Supposition: But here God speaketh absolutely, clearly, and fully, without Ifs or Ands, that so we may see his Mind, and know what to trust to. We use to doubt of Men's Performance of their Words, if they speak waveringly, and as it were unwillingly: But thus it is not with God, He speaks freely, and without Reservation. And to assure us hereof we have first of all the Excellency of his Nature, and secondly his Truth and Faithfulness. Also God loseth nothing by the Sinners Return to Him. When his Creature is Gained, He accounts it as Gain to himself; so that nothing obstructs but our own Obstinacy, and unworthy Refusal; and for that we must blame our selves, *Prov. 1. 24. God saith, because I have stretched out my Hand, and ye refused; therefore I will laugh at your Destruction.* It is God-like, to take pleasure in the Good of others. We know whose Nature it is to take pleasure in the Ruine of others; and who it is that goeth about seeking whom he may Devour; even

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even the *Devil*, whose Nature is most Disc. XIV.
Deformed and Degenerate.

Eighthly, The Repentance of a Sinner, and his turning to God, is a thing so acceptable and well pleasing to God, that he will greatly Reward those that have any hand in it, *Dan. 12. 3. They that be wise shall shine as the Brightness of the Firmament, and they that turn many to Righteousness, as the Stars for ever and ever.* And our Saviour saith, there is Joy in Heaven, at the Conversion of a Luk. 15. 7.
Sinner. And if this may be said to be done by us, which are but Instruments ; much more by him that is the principal and chief Agent. God himself doth so much Favour and Delight in this Work of a Sinner's Conversion ; that when we shall come to know better, how much God was concerned in it ; we shall think Eternity it self too streight, and too narrow for us to Magnify and Praise so good a God, so well deserving at our hands. What Encouragement was it for a Prodigal Son, to be so kindly receiv'd by his Father, *Luk. 15. 11. &c.*

Now the *Conclusion* of all, is this ; since, as we have seen, Sin is so fatal and mischievous to us ; and the Condition of every Sinner so horrid and lamentable

Vol. I. mentable, that is *not* brought to Repentance, and into Reconciliation with God, and to the Law of everlasting Righteousness and Truth : Since, if we are nor according to the Mind of God, we can never be Acceptable to Him, nor made Happy by Him : And since God doth afford us his Grace and Assistance, let us be Encouraged to be up and doing, and set our selves with all our might to leave off to sin, and to Return to our Duty. 'Tis very good News to a Sick Man, to tell him that his Disease is not Mortal ; and to him that is Wounded, that his Wound is Cureable : And 'tis no less Good Tidings to Sinners, that we can tell them, that their Sins are Pardonable upon their Repentance, and that though they have Offended God, they may be Forgiven, and become Acceptable unto him, upon their Conversion, through Christ's Recommendation, and Intercession. And these things make it Credible, which I pray consider.

First, What Sin is, either the Act or Defect of a *Fallible Creature*, and so Reversible. And that by how much the more we are liable to Miscarry through Temptation, by so much the more is

God

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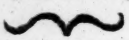
God willing to Receive us upon our Repentance and Return to Him. For this doth abate the Sin of us Men in this State of Weakness and contracted Impotency; for our Sin is not like the Sin of the Angels, that fell without a Tempter for ought we know.

Disc. XIV.

Secondly, As our Act is Reversible, and *made Null by our Repentance*, and Self-condemnation, so God hath all Right to Pardon. First, as he is Lord and Owner of the Creature. Secondly, as He is Governour of the World, so also as he is the First and Chief Goodness. So that if it doth consist with Goodness and the Honour of his Government, a Sinner may be Sure to have it upon the Terms of the Gospel. But then you must come to God's Terms; for otherwise it is good to controul Wickedness and Sin; and it is a Righteous Thing with God, to render Tribulation to those that continue Obstinate.

Thirdly, God *de facto*, hath, and will Pardon Sin to the Penitent. Such is the Excellency of his Nature, that he takes Delight in it. And I will add one thing more that God Concerns himself in our Affairs, and takes Care of Man; and this hath an Universal Acknowledg-

ment;

Vol. I.  ment ; yea, 'tis the very Sense of our Natures, and the Dictates of our Reason ; as I will shew you in these Instances.

1st, If at any time, we fall into Distress, what comes sooner out of our Mouth, than *O God, or God help me.*

2^{dly}, If we do engage, or Undertake any thing wherein there is Difficulty ; we say *In the Name of God.*

3^{dly}, In our Narration, all sober Men say, *as God would have it.*

4^{thly}, In our Deprecations of things that are formidable ; we say, *God forbid.*

5^{thly}, In our Thanksgivings, we ordinarily say, *God be Blessed ; or I Thank God.*

6^{thly}, In our Protestations, we say *Before God, or, as in the presence of God.*

7^{thly}, In our Salutations, one of another, we say, *God be with you, or God keep you.*

And though these in the Mouths of many Men, are formal, and without due Consideration ; yet the Custom of them does proceed from a very good Original, and they speak Natures Sense ; and shew that there is Motion in our Minds towards God ; and some Sense of him upon our Spirits.

D I S

DISCOURSE XV.

The Conversion of a Sinner.

E Z E K. xviii. 27.

When the wicked Man turneth away from his Wickedness that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his Soul alive.

I Have purposed, in the *close* of my Disc. XV. Discourse on this Text, to speak to five things.

I. The *Time* when the Wicked turneth away from his Wickedness.

II. The *Quality* of the Person; *Wicked*. When the wicked Man turneth away from his Wickedness.

III. The *Motion*; Turneth away from his Wickedness.

IV. To

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IV. To give an Account of what is *Lawful and Right*; when the Wicked turneth away from his Wickedness, and doth that which is Lawful and Right.

V. To shew the *Good Effect* of this Motion, he shall save his Soul alive.

I. For the *Time* of his Conversion and Return to God, it is Indefinitely Spoken, and doth not exclude *Late Time*, which may be an Encouragement to every one, be his Case never so Desperate. But then, this is not Spoken to Encourage Mens Delays and Put-offs; for there are four great Evils Consequent upon that.

1st. It were to *Ill-resent* the Goodness of God, thus to Requite his Grace and Favour, that we continue in Sin because God is Gracious. *God Forbid* (saith the Apostle) that we should continue in Sin, because *Grace doth abound*; This would be horrid Ingratitude, and Disingenuity.

2^{dly}, It were to *Abuse our selves*, and do our selves more and more harm. For Evil is against the Nature of Man; it is such a thing as marrs his Nature, and spoils his Principle. Therefore we should never meddle with it, and much less continue in it.

3^{dly},

3dly, It would make the Work which is necessary to our Happiness, much more *hard and Difficult*. For ill Use doth contract bad Habits; and bad Habits contracted by long Use and Custom, are with great Difficulty left off. This the Prophet supposeth in those Words, when he saith; can the *Blackmoor change his Skin, or the Leopard his Spots? then they which are accustomed to do Evil, may learn to do well*, Jer. 13. 23. Impudence and Immodesty, grow upon those that continue in the practice of Iniquity.

4thly, Continuance in Sin doth expose us to far greater *Danger*.

1. Because of the great Uncertainty of Life, for who can promise himself another Day, nay another Moment? and

2. Because of the *Devil's* repeated and continued Assaults, by which he will still get the more Advantage upon us; and so it will become the more difficult to get him out of Possession.

3. In Respect of the Insinuations of *Bad Company*, and Converse. For Men that are Bad themselves, will keep such Company as themselves; and Company and Converse are of an insinuating Quality; and *that* is done by Treaty,

Vol. I. and Converse, which is not done on a sudden.

4. All the while you stand out you are in a way of *Resistance* of the Holy Spirit, and Fight against the Motions of God Almighty ; which are necessary to bring you to Good, and to Qualify you for Eternal Life. Let therefore no Man think, that he may lead a Sinful Life of Pleasure here, and Immediately Repent and enter into Life. For Heaven is rather a *State* than a *Place* ; and doth require a good Temper of Mind, to Qualify us for the Enjoyment of it. And we are said to be *Saved*, in the Language of Scripture, when we are Delivered from *our Sins*, and Qualified for the Enjoyment of God. And there must be *Salvation of Grace*, as antecedent to that of *Glory*. For Happiness hath its Foundation in Holiness, and there must be either a Conscience void of Offence, by absolute *Innocence* ; or ease of Guilt, by our *Repentance*, and *God's Pardon* : Otherwise there is no Salvation ; for, a Guilty Conscience hath Hell within it self. There are many that would be *Saved* in a Negative Sense, that is, they would not be *Damned* ; but *this* is not a just Explication

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tion of Salvation ; for Heaven and Sal- Disc. XV.
vation is Begun here, and therefore the
Apostle saith, *who hath saved us and* 2 Tim. 1. 9.
called us. And so much for the first
particular, the *Time* when the Wicked
Turneth away from his Wickedness.

II. The *Quality* of the Person ; *Wick-*
ed. And here I must acquaint you,
that Scripture doth not denominate
persons *Wicked*, or *Sinners*, or *Workers*
of Iniquity, from Weaknesses, Failings,
or from Error of Judgment, or from In-
disposition at times, from sudden Passion,
or Surprizal ; nor from the Irregularity
of the first Motion, that is so Trouble-
some and Grievous unto us all. But
they are called *Sinners* and *Wicked Per-*
sons, who *Voluntarily consent to known*
Iniquity ; who while they have Know-
ledge and Judgment of that which is
Right, for base Ends and Purposes act
contrary thereunto, and continue in
Sin and Apostasie from the Truth.
Sins of the former sort, such as Weak-
ness and Failings, through Temptation
or sudden surprize ; require our Modesty
and asking God Forgiveness : as also
our greater Care and Diligence, and
constant Application to God, and Com-
mitting our selves into his Hand ; and

Vol. I. in so doing, God doth readily Forgive.

~~~~~ For he remembers our Frame, and considers and makes allowance for our Weakness, *Pf. 103. 13. and Mat. 3. 17. As a Father pitieth his Children, so the Lord pitieth those that fear him; and He will spare them as a Man spareth his own Son that serveth him.*

III. I now proceed to the Third, to shew when a Man may be said to *Turn* from his Wickedness; to which enquiry I shall Answer by Three Negative, and Three Affirmative Propositions. The *Negatives* are these.

*1st.* A Man is *not* said to turn away from his Iniquities, when his Sin rather leaves him, than he leaves it; either through Age and Disability of Body; or through Weakness and Infirmary; so that he cannot bear to do as he has formerly done. Now, this is the case many times of the *Riotous* and Intemperate, who use to *Rise up early in the Morning, that they might follow strong Drink; that continue until Night, till Wine Inflame them.* But this they cannot do always. Then for the *Prodigal*, that profusely spends all that he hath, and is brought to a Morsel of Bread, and like him that we read of, *Luk. 15. 14. made to feed with*

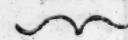
*Isa. 5. 11.*

with the Swine upon Husks ; such a Man's Sin hath rather left him, than he it. The like may be said of *Wanton* Lascivious persons, that have quite spoiled and disabled their Bodies. And also of *False Dealers*, who have been so often found out, that no body will Trust them, or have to do with them ; you cannot say that such Men as these have turned from their Wickedness.

2. Such Men as are *not at* their own *Liberty* ; but under Tutors and Governours, whom they dare not disobey ; who are as it were shut up, and not suffered to ramble abroad. These Men cannot be said to have Turned from their Wickedness.

3. Nor *when Sin is made bitter* to Men, by suffering the bad Consequences that follow upon it. Sometimes Men suffer in their Names, or in their Estates, or in their Bodies. Guilt doth always Prophecy Evil things, and Sin is a Shame and Reproach to any Person that commits it, *Pro. 23. 29. Who hath Wo, who hath Sorrow, who hath Contentions, who hath Babblings, who hath Wounds without Cause, who hath redness of Eyes ? They that tarry long at the Wine ; they that go to seek new Wine.* It is said of

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 Lafiness, Idleness and Sluggishness, that it is more Painful than Industry and Diligence; and to be Employed, is easier than to be Idle. So it may be said of other Vices; the Mischiefs and Inconveniencies that follow upon Dissolute Living, and naughty Practices, are not Ballanced by the Pleasure that they bring, but are dearly paid for. Whereas ways of Goodness and Vertue are Delightful, and end in Peace; as you read *Prov. 3. 17. All her ways are Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace.* For the several Vertues they are suitable and connatural; every Vertue is according to the Nature of Man, and agrees with the reason of his Mind, which is the Superiour and Governing Principle. As to Instance, by comparing some Vertues and Vices together. Pride, Insolence, Envy, Malice, these are Troublesome and Unnatural: There is no greater Torment, or worse Rack, than for a Man to live in Malice, and bear Envy and Ill-will. Those that are Arrogant and Proud, Create to themselves a World of Difficulty, besides much Ill-will and Displeasure: Whereas Modesty, Gentleness, Loving-kindness, Quietness, is according to the Nature of Man, and cre-

ates



ates no trouble or difficulty to a Man. But to return to the matter in hand.

There is much Difference between these two ; between our Leaving of Sin, and its Leaving of us ; when we do not act from our own Principle ; but the bitterness of Sin appears by its Sufferings, and by this, we are made to Desist ; in these Cases a Man cannot be said to Return from his Wickedness. But then *Affirmatively*, in three particulars.

1<sup>st</sup>. When we leave Sin out of Sense and Judgment of its *Vileness*, and Impurity. For all Sin is such in its own Nature ; and therefore we read, that the Sons of *Eli made themselves vile by their Wickedness*, 1 Sam. 13. And Jer. 1. 17. we read *That it is an Evil, and a bitter thing to forsake the Lord our God*. For in Morals you must know that the Ground, Motive and Reason of the Action, doth Specificate the Action, rather than the matter of it. For two Persons may do One, and the same Action ; the same thing materially may be done ; and yet the Action may be very different, because of the Ground, Principle and Motive, upon which it was done. This for certain you must know, that it is not a Vertuous Action, if be not done *because* the thing is



Vol. I. Good, and avoided *because* it is Evil,  
 ~~~~~ That is the first, when we Leave Sin,  
 out of Sense and Judgment of its Vile-
 ness, Badness and Iniquity.

2. When we leave Sin out of Re-
spect to God, in Obedience unto his
 Laws, and Love to Him. This was the
 Temper found in *Joseph*; who when
 Gen. 39. 9. Sin was presented to him, said, *how can*
I do this Wickedness, and Sin against God?
 When it is more to us, to give God an
 Offence, than to Expose our own Lives
 and Liberties. When a Man will not
 destroy the Cause of God, to save his
 own Life. Now if it be *suggested*, That
 this is a Notion not practicable, because
 God is at so great a Distance. *I Answer*,
 It is done out of Respect to God, when
 we do a thing because it is Just, Fit and
 Right; because it is Good and ought to
 be. And this is Intelligible; for every
 Man knows what is the Ground and
 Reason of his Action; he knows whe-
 ther he doth it out of a sense of the Good-
 ness of the Thing itself; or out of any
 other Reason. For Man, as a Moral
 Agent, is only considerable, as to his
End and *Principle*. For God is best
 known to us, by being Good, as being
 the First and chiefest Goodness. To do
 a thing

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a thing therefore, because it is *Good*, is to do it out of Love to God : And to avoid a thing because it is *Evil*, is the same as not to do it, because it will give God an Offence. And this is an Explication of doing a thing out of *Love to God*, and out of *Respect to him*. And I have found this among the *Philosophers*, that never had the Advantage of a Bible, who tell us, “ That “ if any thing be without Respect to “ God, it is not an Action of Vertue. There is nothing in the World better known to us, if we sink not down by Sensuality into Brutishness, or by Malice into Devilishness, than that there is a God, and a difference between *Good* and *Evil*. These we are all made to know, and herein we may not fail. Whosoever doth not know these things, it is matter of his Shame, and a Sign that he hath greatly neglected himself. For who doth not know that it is better for a Man to live in Love and Goodwill, than to live in Malice, Envy, Hatred, &c. Who doth not know, it is better for a Man to be Sober, Just and Temperate, than to be Wanton and Lascivious ? For a Man to govern himself according to Nature and Reason, than

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Disc. XV.

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Epictet.

Vol. I. for to Abuse himself? Who doth not know, that it is better to Honour God, and to give him Thanks, than to Blasphe^m him? That is the Second, when we leave Sin out of *Judgment* and Sense of its Filthiness and Baseness, when we do our Duty out of Respect to God, and in Obedience to his Laws and Love to Him.

3. A Man cannot be said to Return from his Wickedness, unless he doth conceive *Displeasure* at it, and Resolve never to have to do with it again. Thus when a Man leaves Sin, with Displacency and Abhorrence; he may be said to Turn away from it: Otherwise it is but Forbearance for a while, upon some Reason, and as a matter of Prudence, like that of *Felix*, *Acts. 24. 25. God speaks Peace unto his People, but let not them return again to folly, as the Psalmist hath it, Ps. 58. 8.* If a Man do not continue in a good Course, it cannot be said that he is Turned from his Wickedness, nor that it proceeded from the Change of his Nature, but was rather a Suspension, than a Dislike of his former ways. They that *Love the Lord*, and do sincerely Turn to him, *Hate Evil. Ps. 47. 10.* We

We must not only Depart from Evil, and do Good, but we *must Hate Evil*, as the Apostle Directs, *Rom. 12. 9. We must Abhor Evil, and Cleave unto that which is Good.* This is the third Particular. When Men leave their Sins out of *Displacency*, and take Offence at them; otherwise it may be Forbearance upon some Prudential Account; but doth not amount to *Turning away from their Wickedness.* So that you see this Alteration is by the Motion of the Mind, and Understanding; and is made by the Choice of the Will; the Mind is chang'd, and other Judgment is made, so that this Man Differs from himself. As a Man Differs that was in a deadly Disease, and is Restored; so doth a Man Differ from himself, after he leaves Sin, and doth Return to his Duty. And so much for the Third thing, when a Man may be said to Return from his Wickedness.

IV. In the next place I am to give you an Account of *Lawful* and *Right*. *When the Wicked Man turns away from his Wickedness, and doth that which is Lawful and Right.* Here are Two Words for one and the same thing; and the one is explicatory of the other. Now this is that, which we all ought to do;

Vol. I. do ; and there is no pretence of Power and Privilege to the contrary. And if every Body did confine himself to that which is Right, Just and Fit, we should have a *New World* ; and There would be nothing of Wrong, or hard Measure found among us ; we should then be the better one for another. But here is the Mischief, some go beyond their Bounds, and do not confine themselves to that which is *Lawful* and *Right* ; which are but two Words for the same thing.

Right gives Rule to the *Law*, and the Law doth declare what is Right : And it is not a Law, if it be Unrighteous and unjust. This must be true of all *Humane* Laws ; for I am sure it is true of all the Laws of *God*. The Psalmist saith, *Pf. 119. 142. That thy Law is Truth* ; that is, it as it should be ; for *Right* is the Boundary of *Power* and *Privilege* ; for it is not *Power*, if it be not in conjunction with *Right* and *Truth* ; for *God* declares that his *Throne is established in Righteousness*, *Pf. 89. 14*. It is not *Power* to be able to do that which ought not to be done ; for *Ungovern'd Appetite* is not *Power*, but *Weakness*. It is not *Power* to do *Evil*, but *Impotency* *Weakness* and *Deformity*. *Free-will*, which

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which we so much contend for, and brag so much of; it is no absolute Perfection, and we need not be so proud of it. For Free-will, as it includes a Power to do Wrong, as well as Right, is not to be found in God himself; and therefore it is no Perfection in us. For this is true of God, that all his ways are ways of Righteousness, Goodness and Truth; and there is not in him a Power to do otherwise than is Just and Right. And if we were *God-like*, as we should be, the *Fruit of the Spirit in us* would be *in all Righteousness, Goodness and Truth*. If *this* were the Religion of the World, where would be Revenge, Malice, Spite, and doing Wrong one to another? And as God *doth* that in all Cases, which is Just, Fit, Right and Good, so doth he require of us, nothing but what is Just, Right, Fit and Good: And this he doth require of us, under the Promise of a Reward, tho' it is our Duty so to do, and our Righteousness to be found in such ways. And God prohibits us nothing that is Right and Good; and wheresoever he doth impose a Law upon us, he shews us that it is fit for us to be restrain'd, and shews us that his Laws are easie and profitable
for

Vol. I for us. I am not far from the Opinion of those Men that think the Prohibition laid upon *Adam* in Paradise, was not so much to shew his Power, as Monitory ; that the Fruit was not good for Man, and would do him harm if he meddled with it. If it be so, then it doth take off that, which some Men think doth reflect upon the Divine Goodness. But for this let him receive it that sees cause.

Now if it be so, That God commands nothing but what is reasonable, just and fit, and prohibits nothing but what is noxious to us, and for our hurt and prejudice ; then how comes it to pass that we, sorry, impotent Creatures, pretend to Power and Priviledge, otherwise than what is Right and Just, or for the Best ? How comes it to pass that we are so addicted to set up Will for a Rule, and for a Law ; a Will contrary to God, and to the Reason of the Thing, which is a Law antecedent to the very Creation ? For upon this Supposition, that God will make such a Creature as Man, the *Reason of Things* requires that he should be made under such a Law, and under such Obligations. For if God do make a Creature

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Disc: XV.

ture that is voluntary and intelligent ; we must leave him to the direction of his Faculties, otherwise he should controul his own Workmanship. Now Will is no Rule at all, nor gives any Warrant : The Laws of Nature ought not to be varied from ; that is, *what is Reason, what is Right and Fit*. Will stands for nothing, in disjunction from Reason and Right. There is nothing gives more Offence, than for a Man proudly and malepertly to say, *he will, because he will*. Our Apprehensions of Right, are regulated by the Nature of Things ; and we have a Lye in our Minds, if we act otherwise. For *Truth is first in Things*, and *then* is the *Truth* in our *Understandings*. Truth lies in our Regularity and Conformity with our Apprehension of the Reason of Things : And I am therefore in the Truth, because I conceive of Things as they are. But *Things* give Law to Notion and Apprehension. This is a gallant Theme that I am upon, and a more generous Argument there is not under the Sun ; and that which would tend to the Settlement of the World, and every body in their Dues and Rights.

But

Vol. I. But a Man may Philosophize never so well in Generals; if he do not bring down Things to Particulars, it will not do. Now therefore go along with me, and I will Particularise this in Notion and Cases.

There is a Rule of Right in all Cases, and 'tis the *Charge* of all Persons in the use of Power, to judge and determine according unto that Rule. And *he* is weak that cannot judge what is the Right of the Case; and Wicked, that for Ends and Purposes will vary from it. Now that there is a Rule of Right in all Cases, I will shew you in particular Instances. And

1st. I will begin with the Relation that is between *Parents* and *Children*, and shew you what is Right for Parents to do with their Children, and Children to their Parents. 1st. For the *Parent*, who is, in a sort, in the Order of God to the Children; as being, next after God, the cause of their Being and Original; yet he must not behave himself *any* way, nor after *any fashion*, towards his Children. For it is said, *Fathers, provoke not your Children to wrath*. He must deal with them tenderly, and in a way of Reason, and not justly give them Offence,

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Offence, or provoke them. This is the *Right of the Case* between *Fathers* and *Children*. Then for the *Child*, he must Obey his Parents in all things, and must do as he is bidden, so there be nothing unreasonable or Evil in it. Disc. XV.

2. I go to the Relation of *Husbands* and *Wives*; there is the *Right of the Case* between them. For the *Husband*, that in some things hath the Superiority, and is the first Mover, yet *Col. 3. 19.* we read, that the Husband *must not be bitter against his Wife*; nor give her an Offensive Word, nor use any hard Language; but lead her on fairly, by reason; and satisfy her by Argument, and in a fair way. And this is the *Right of the case*, as to that. Then he ought to give her *Honour*, as *the weaker Vessel*, and give her the Advantage of her Sex, as you read *1 Pet. 3. 7.* Then for the *Right of the case*, as to the *Wife* towards her *Husband*: The *Wives Conversation* towards her Husband, ought to be such as to gain upon him, supposing that he be not in all things as he ought: As that if he be froward and hard to please; the *Wives Conversation* ought to be Endearing, that so he may thereby gain upon him, and bring him to Temper, *1 Pet. 3. 1.* C c 5. Thet

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3. Then for *Masters* and *Servants*.

Masters render to your *Servants* what is *Right*, that which is equal, fair and reasonable. Do not Usurp over them, do not use them as if they were Irrational Creatures, but as those that are of the same Species and kind with themselves; *not using Threatning Words*, but remembring that they have a *Master in Heaven*, and that there is no respect of *Persons* with him. Then for *Servants*, there is the *Right of the case* for them also, and that is to *Obey their Masters in all things*, and to be True and Faithful to them. And to do as the *Centurion* said of his *Servants*; to one he said go, and he went; and to another come, and he cometh. I have in short given you the *Right of the case*, in these three Relations of Parents and Children, Husbands and Wives, Master and Servant.

Then in our *Common Converse*, we ought to use all Humanity, Courtesy and Affability, giving all Respect, despising no body. We ought not so much to Undervalue any Man in Company, as to refuse to hear his Sense. For I would never come into that Man's Company, that I would not hear his Sense. Then we must be ready to render a Reason to every

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every one that demandeth it ; 1 Pet. 3. Disc. XV.

15. Then for our Carriage towards the Poor, the *Right of the case* is set down *Ecclesiasticus* 4. 4 we *must not turn away from a Poor Man*, but hear him speak, and give him a fair answer, if you cannot answer his request. This is agreeable to the counsel of the *Son of Syrac*, who saith, *Let it not grieve thee to bow down thine ear unto the Poor*, and to give him an answer with *Meekness*.

4. To descend to the Creatures below us, there is a *Right of the case* here also. We must not Abuse any of those Creatures below us. For *Solomon* saith, the *Righteous man takes care of his Beast* : we must not abuse so much as our Horse, or our Dog. By these you see, that there is in all times and Cases the *Rule of Right*, which is to do as the case require toward all Persons, in all Times, and in all Cases. What is Reason, what is Right, what is Fit? even as we our selves would be done to, were we in those circumstances. And it is a Man's Understanding, to find out what *that is* ; and his Uprightness and Integrity, to do *accordingly*.

Now if this be true, 'tis adviseable that a man be *habituated* and well

Vol. I. Prepared, that he may not be at a loss.

~~~~~ If a Man have pre-considered, and examined and been well advised beforehand ; when any case comes, he is prepared, and so he will be ready to do as *the Right of the case* require. Whereas if he be otherwise, he will be at a loss, and not know what to do when he comes to act. It is hap-hazard whether he will do Right, or Wrong : and so will not act like a Man of Prudence, and Vertue. For this I must tell you, Passion and Self-will, are no Principle of Action ; by these we are never to act, nor to Warrant any thing we do. For he that doth this, acts not like a Man, but like a Fury ; he doth not act according to the Principle of Reason, but like a mad Man. The great Iniquity in this Inferior world, is this, that Men assume to themselves to do because they *Will*, which is a very great Transgression, and the highest exorbitancy of extravagant Creatures. For a Man to do *because he will*, or because he hath a mind, alas this is nothing to any Man else. What is this Man's Mind, to another Man ? for he expects to be dealt with according to *Reason*, and the *Right* of  
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of the case. There are some Men, Disc. XV.  
that are so governed by this Rule,  
that a Man may know how they will act  
in any case. But *Arbitrary* Men, are  
Men that Live in a Humor or Passion :  
and no Man knows where to have them,  
or what they will do.

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## DISCOURSE XVI.

*The Conversion of a Sinner.*

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E Z E K. xviii. 27.

*When the wicked Man turneth away from his Wickedness that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his Soul alive.*

THE foregoing Truth I have de- Disc. XVI.  
 clared with great Assurance unto  
 you : And I am confident nothing in  
 God's Creation can stand up in Opposi-  
 tion to this Noble and Generous No-  
 tion. And could I but fasten this up-  
 on the World, I should mend the  
 World : For Reformation must begin  
*from within*, from the better Informa-  
 tion of Mens Minds, before ever their



Vol. I. Actions will be well directed and governed.

But here some one may rise up and say, may I not *Please my own Mind*?

Yes, thou may'st please thy self in *Materia Libera*; that is, in Matters of thy own Right; where no body else hath any demand of Right. Where the Matter is wholly free and indifferent, as whether a Man will ride or go on foot: In which, and a thousand other things of like nature, he doth no body any Injury. Or,

Where it is only a Man's own Right, and no other Man hath any demand upon him, there a Man may please his own Mind, without any Offence to God, or Injury to Men. But otherwise, if I have not the *sole* Right, but another hath a Demand; then this of pleasing a Man's self, or doing according to his own Mind, must be excluded, and shut out of Doors. I say, where the Reason of the thing is contrary, or others have a Demand of Right, there a Man's own Mind is no Warrant. Therefore this is that I resolve upon, where-ever a Man hath Authority

thority, or a lawful Use, I would always have him have Reason go along with the Use of his Authority; and then He will have a great Satisfaction that doth command: and *Others* will easily and readily obey. For a Man loves to see Reason, for what he doth; and then a Man's Commands are justified, when Reason runs along with his Will and Pleasure. And he that obeys, will find it mighty easie to obey Reason; but it is horribly troublesome to do without Reason, and still worse to do against it. To obey without Reason, is to be led like Beasts; and the Nature of Man will be impatient under it: For this is that which all Men call for, *Do me Reason, Do me Right*, and when this is done Men are satisfied. And this no Man should deny; for God himself hath given Reason for the Rule of Action and Law of Right. And 'tis the very self-same thing for a Man to observe God and fulfil his Will, and to do that which Reason doth require. For Right is determined by its agreeableness with the *Reason of Things*; and things are driven by Force and Violence, that are not done with Reason: and therefore will return back again,  
as

Vol. I. as soon as that Force is taken off. As  
 ~~~~~ if by Power you bend a Stick, it will  
 return to its streightness, as soon as
 that Force is taken off. If you draw
 a Bow by Srength never so much, it
 will return to its former Latitude, when
 the Hand is taken off. Things will not
 hold long, if under Force and Violence;
 but if they be according to the Right
 of the Case, and according to Reason,
 they will hold when they are done. And
 this is that which God expects, that a
 wicked Man should *Turn from his Wicked-*
ness, and do that which is Lawful and
right; by which *he shall save his Soul*
alive. Which brings me

V. To the *Beneficial Part* of the
 Words, the Happiness that follows up-
 on Renovation, Repentance, and turn-
 ing to God. He that doth so, shall *save*
his Soul alive. Where you have the prin-
 cipal Part put for the whole: not that
 the Body shall be neglected; for God
 that takes Care of Oxen, will take care
 of *it* also. He shall Save his *Soul* a-
 live; Not as if we were not to look
 upon the Soul as Immortal: But this is
 the Account I give of that. Misery is
 worse than Death: to live, is to be well
 and in good Health. I am fully satis-
 fied,

fied, that it is better not to be at all, ^{Disc. XVI.} than to be miserable; and for this I will take our Saviour's warrant, *Mar. 14. 21.* where he saith, *That it had been good for that Man if he had not been born, that should betray the Son of God.* And the Apostle tells us, of the Woman that liveth in Wantonness, that she is *dead even while she liveth.* If any Man be under Guilt, he is dead while alive. Whosoever doth amiss, doth abuse himself, and wrong his own Soul: And he that doth continue in ill doing, doth take a course finally to undo himself. It is the case of us Men, even of us, sometimes in life to have done amiss, and to have perverted our way. But thanks be to God, through the Grace of the Gospel, there is a way of Recovery: Repentance is a Plank after Shipwreck, whereby a Man may save himself; we are therefore not to Despair; but to Turn from our Wickedness; and we have God's Declaration and Promise that we shall *save our Souls alive.* 'Tis a great Word, but God hath spoken it, and shall not he make it Good? *Isai. 45.* *He shall save his Soul alive:* It is God that hath spoken it, in whose Hands are the Issues of Life and Death, who

Vol. I. who hath Power to kill and to make
 ~~~~~ alive, *Matt. 10.* In the five Books of  
*Moses* you have often these Words,  
*That Soul shall be cut off from among his*  
*People* : that is the Punishment shall be  
 inflicted by the hand of God himself.  
 And therefore it is said to be *a fearful*  
*thing to fall into the hands of the li-*  
*ving God.* This sometimes, yea very  
 often, is the case of those, which sin  
 so secretly, that they escape the Cog-  
 nizance of Men. But the more are  
 such Men in Danger of falling by the  
 Hand of God ; if by the Secretness of  
 the Fact, the Judgment of Man can-  
 not lay hold of it. For this is most  
 certain, that none shall finally prevail  
 in Wickedness : *Though hand joyn in hand*  
*yet the wicked shall not go unpunished.*  
 And where the Hand of the Magistrate,  
 either because of Power, or Secrecy  
 cannot reach, God himself will Judge  
 in those cases ; and He will proceed  
 according as things are. Though be-  
 fore Men, not to be proved, and not  
 to Be, are the same thing ; yet God  
 searcheth the Heart, and he cannot  
 be deceived. God hath given us dou-  
 ble Security for our Lives, and we have  
 just Expectation from both : the *First*  
 is

Prov. 11.  
 21.

## The Conversion of a Sinner.

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Disc. XVI.

is from Innocence, for God made us in his own Image. But because we have failed, here is a *Second* Provision that God hath made by the Motion of Repentance, and this is God's After-Grant. The first was the State of God's Creation : The next was that of Restauration, and Recovery by Repentance, which is declared by the Gospel. So that now having lost our Innocence, let us look after Salvation by the motion of Repentance, which through God's Grace is sufficient, and will be effectual to prevent Punishment : which is the true Explication of *Remission of Sins*. For if Sin be committed, no Power can make that not to have been done. Nor, Secondly, if a thing hath been done amiss, can it be made not to be worthy of Punishment. But the Forgiveness of Sin doth prevent the deserved Punishment of Sin. Therefore, since we have all of us lost the Snow-like Whiteness of Innocence, which was the Beauty of our Creation : Let us now look after that Whiteness which is by Blood. For so you have the Expression in the *Revelations* : That they were *washed white* Rev. 7. 14. *in the Blood of the Lamb*. The Faith  
of

Vol. I of the Lord *Jesus Christ* conjoyned with  
 ~~~~~ our Repentance and Reformation, is  
 now the only way to obtain Pardon
 and Forgiveness. Now unless a Man
 Repent, he cannot be sensible of the
 Impurity of the Act, nor of his Dan-
 ger thereby ; and till this be done, he
 will not seek after his Remedy, no more
 than a Man will seek after a Physitian,
 that is not sensible of his Disease, nor
 of his Danger by means thereof. No
 Man will go to *Christ* for Pardon, un-
 less he be sensible of the Evil of Sin
 and of which he doth Repent, and
 Condemn himself, and Resolve against
 it ; for no true Penitent doth allow
 himself in Sin.

But farther, *shall save his Soul alive.*
 From this we may understand of how
 great Benefit the good Use and Im-
 provement of our *Time* is. Time, though
 it be of the slenderest Entity, yet 'tis
 of the most Moral Consideration, be-
 cause improveable to the highest Ad-
 vantage. Our time is a day of Grace,
 for we are in a Probation-state : So
 that now it fairly lyes before us, to
 make our selves Happy for ever. And
 we may also by the abuse of the Grace
 of God, Undo our selves for ever.

Therefore

The Conversion of a Sinner.

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Therefore I say unto you in the Words of *Dent. 30. 19.* *I set before you this day Life and Death, Blessing and Cursing, choose Life.* For when a *Wicked Man* turneth away from his *Wickedness* that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his Soul alive. But if he continue in *Wickedness*, he shall surely dye.

Disc. XVI

How many are there that Overlook the Business, Purpose and Intention of Life! We are here to run a Race, and so to run that we may obtain: and therefore we are to Watch over our selves, both as to the things of our Mind, and Body; and so to keep under our Bodies, and bring them into Subjection, that we may not ruin and undo our selves. Now this is another thing, than to gratifie our Sense, and live in a Humour. No, no, we must run the race that is set before us, and as those that strain for the Mastery, must be Temperate in all things. This is our Business, to serve the Interest of our Souls, in the state that is before us. Therefore I advise every Man that is serious, to ask himself these Questions.

1st. Will

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1st. Will this that I have done, or am doing, be Accountable, when God shall call me to a Reckoning? When any thing doubtful is proposed, or of a bad Quality, then ask this Question; Shall I be able to give an Account for this, when I shall stand before the Tribunal Seat of Christ? The

2d. Question is that which *Abigail* put to *David*, *1 Sam. 25.* *This will be no grief of heart, nor offence unto thee.*

3d. Question is, What shall I think of this, when I shall lye upon my Death Bed? What Judgment or Apprehension shall I have of it then? The

4th. Question is, How Remediless will the Consequence of Evil be, when I shall have the least Relief by my Reason, and be least capable of advice; and when I shall have the least Assistance of God's Grace and Spirit? How shall I be then able to bear up against the intollerable Burthen of Evil and Guilt too? Let us consider that we Dye daily in a threefold respect; in respect of Age, in respect of Diseases, and in respect of Hazard and Danger. In respect of Age, we grow nearer and nearer unto Death: and in respect of Diseases, which is
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The Conversion of a Sinner.

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Death in some degree : and lastly in Disc. XVI.
respect of Hazard and Danger from abroad. For whosoever neglects God and the Law, may be Master of any bodies Life. How will Men satisfy themselves, that take so little care how they pass out of Time, into Eternity ? That live and dye in such a Frame and Temper, which is altogether unfit for the Business and Employment of Eternity ? For if we expect to be Happy, and to attend upon God, and holy Angels, and Saints in Glory ; it is necessary that we free our selves from all Impurity, and by Holiness of Life qualify our selves for the Enjoyment of God. For our Saviour hath told us, that unless we be converted, and become as little Children, that are Innocent and Harmless, that may suffer wrong, but will do none, we cannot enter into Heaven. These three things do utterly unqualify a Man for the State of Glory and Happiness.

1. Earthliness, Worldliness, and Carnality.

2. A Spirit of Malice, Ill-will, and Revenge.

3. Pride, Arrogancy, and Haughtiness.

D d

1. Earth-

Vol. I.

1. *Earthlinefs*, Worldlinefs, and Carnality. The Psalmist tells us, *Pfal.* 17. 11. That Worldly Men *have their portion in this life*. They being unqualified for the State of Eternity.

2. Then for those that live in the Spirit of Envy, *Malice*, and Ill-will. They have the very Spirit and Temper of the *Devil*, who goes about seeking whom he may devour.

3. And for Pride : the Apostle *Jude* tells us, that this was the very temper of the Angels that fell, that kept not their first state, but through Pride and Arrogance, did assume to themselves.

But to draw to a *Conclusion*. Since now we have such a Declaration as this in the Text, which contains the fulness of Gospel Knowledge : That *when the wicked Man turneth away from his Wickedness, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his Soul alive*. Let us entertain good Thoughts of God, let us have right Apprehensions of him in our Minds ; always think so of God, as to encourage our Application to Him. And never think that He is Implacable ; but that He is ready to forgive, and is no hard Master, nor difficult to please, nor backward

ward to forgive. Yea, I will say more, Disc. XVI.
That God is such a Friend to our Souls, and takes such Delight in our Conversion and turning to him, that he will not be wanting on his Part, to afford us what is necessary, for our Enablement and Encouragement. And should we think otherwise of God, we should fret in our Minds against him, and set down in Discontent and Despair: just as you have an account in *Rev. 9. 6.* of some that blasphemed God because of their Pains. This was the Temper of *Cain*, who said, *my sin is greater than can be forgiven.* By this a Man doth put himself quite out of the way of Forgiveness.

I add, That it is the special and genuine Effect of the Mercy of God to bring Sinners to Repentance. But by every evil Act that a Man doth commit, his Recovery is the more difficult; because Sin doth put a Man quite out of Temper, and sets him at the greater distance from God. For Sin hardens a Man's Heart, and spoils the Modesty of Intellectual Nature, and much more disposeth a Man for Evil, than he was before.

Vol. I.

Now in the close of all, I will re-
 inforce the Advice of the Text, That
 the *Wicked turn from his Wickedness*. And
 let us not herein be mistaken, for we ought
 in nothing more to understand our selves
 aright; because it is the case of Life
 and Death. Therefore in these Cases,
 as I told you, Men cannot be said to
 forsake their Sins, when *Sin* rather
 leaves them, than they their Sins; when
 his turning from Sin ariseth rather from
 abroad than from himself, and is rather
 the effect of his Company, and those
 that have Power over him. You can-
 not say that Men turn from their Wick-
 edness, when 'tis not their own Moti-
 on, nor what they would do if free and
 left to themselves. Nor when a Man
 out of fear of former Sufferings, doth
 not do as formerly he did. For you
 must know, that all Vice and Wicked-
 ness is first contrary to the Reason of
 our Minds; and secondly, to the Health
 of our Bodies: For by Sin and Wicked-
 ness Men lay the Foundation of Aches
 and Diseases, and shorten their Days.
 In these Cases a Man *cannot* be said to
 turn from his Sins: But in the other Ca-
 ses which I named, a Man *may* be said to
 turn from his Wickedness.

First,

First, When the wicked Man loaths his Sin out of *Sense* and Judgment of the *Baseness* and Vileness of it. For the Motion, Ground, and Principle of an Action, doth specificate the Action. And you cannot upon a moral Account, estimate an Action from the Materiality of it, but from the Intention, Motion, Ground, and Principle from which it doth proceed. And it is Reason in Intellectual Nature and Choice, that makes it an Action of Vertue.

Secondly, When we avoid Sin and Evil out of *respect to God*, because we will not give him an Offence. For this is Religion, to have the *Fear of God* before our Eyes : and 'tis but the Vertue of a Heathen, to avoid Sin upon any other account. Now because God is invisible, if any should ask how he might know what he doth is with respect to God : You may know by that which is materially the same with it. To do a thing because it is consonant to Reason and to avoid a thing because it is contrary to Reason, is materially the same as to do, or forbear with respect to God. And I will make this out, because two things are Matter of easie Knowledge,

D d 3

Vol. I. ledge, and the great things of Religion.

1st. That there is a *God*. And,

2^{dly}. That there is a Difference between *Good and Evil*. And if we have not sunk our selves into Brutishness, by Sensuality, or into Devilishness, by Malice, Envy, and Ill-will; a Man cannot be ignorant of either of these.

That there is a *God* every Man must grant, because he did not call himself into Being out of nothing. This is plain, because he cannot continue himself in that Being which he hath. For to call a Thing into Being out of nothing, is an Act of much greater Power, than to continue a Being that we have.

And for the difference of *Good and Evil*, nothing is more knowable. Will not every Man grant, that there is great Difference between living in Sobriety and Temperance, and living in Luxury and Wantonness; that the one is far better than the other? That it is better for a Man to govern his Passion, and to be Affable and Courteous, than to be Furious, Insolent, Arrogant, and Tumultuous?

3. But

But *Thirdly* and Lastly, A Man may be said to turn from his Wickedness when he conceives Displeasure against it, and fully purposes never to return to it again. whatsoever Temptations or Provocations he may meet withal. Otherwise it may be but only Forbearance of the Act; unless a Man withdraws from it through dislike, and take up Resolutions never to do the like. Now if the wicked Man do thus *Turn away from his Wickedness, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his Soul alive.*

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THE PRAYER:

Some Parts of which were ordinarily used by Dr. *Whichcote* before Sermon.

A *Almighty God, the Father of our* Vol. I.
Lord Jesus Christ, the God of the ~~~~~
Spirits of all Flesh, we profess all Dependence upon Thee, we live in all Expectation from Thee. Awaken (we intreat Thee) all the Powers and Faculties of our Souls to A&ts of lively Sense and Apprehension of Thee. Call us to due Dilligence and careful Attendance upon Thee, that we may have our God highly in Regard ; that we may have great Reverence of Deity in our Minds ; that we may be in the Fear and Apprehension of Thee while we are before Thee.

Put us (we humbly pray thee) upon all those A&ts towards Thee that ever Thou madest us capable of, in the Moment

Vol. I. *ment of thy Creation of us ; that we may
 ~~~~~duly acknowledge Thee, who art the Ori-  
 ginal of our Beings ; that we may great-  
 ly Reverence Thee, who art the Father  
 of our Spirits ; that we may obey Thee  
 fully, who art our Governour ; that we  
 may serve thee freely, who art our Lord  
 and Owner ; that we may be thankful un-  
 to Thee, who art our great Benefactor ;  
 that we may admire and adore Thee, who  
 art a Being of all Perfection ; that we  
 may love and delight in Thee, who art  
 the first and chiefest Good ; that we may  
 place all Affiance, Trust, and Confidence  
 in Thee, because of thy gracious promises ;  
 that we may come unto Thee, in Answer  
 to thy Invitation and Call ; that we may  
 believe Thee, who art most Certain and  
 Infallible ; that we may commit the great  
 Trust of our Souls unto Thee, because of  
 thy known Faithfulness to us ; That we  
 may rest in Thee, the Centre of Immortal  
 Spirits ; and ultimately refer to Thee, who  
 art the End of all Things ; and in the  
 Use of our Liberty, that we may present  
 thy Majesty with a Free-will Offering, and  
 bring unto Thee the Consent of our Minds ;  
 that so we may become altogether Thine ;  
 that as we are Thine by thy Creation of us,  
 by thy Maintenance, and Preservation, by  
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## The Prayer.

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*thy constant Providence over us, by thy gracious assuming of us into a Relation to thy Self by thy Son, making us the Adoption of thy Grace ; so we may be also Thine, by our voluntary Dedicating and Devoting our selves to thy Fear and Service.*

2. To this purpose destroy out of us, whatever we have acquired Unnatural to the Principles of thy Creation of us, by abuse of our selves, by neglect of thy Grace, by compliance with the Corrupt Guise of this sinful, degenerate, and apostate World. O naturalize us to Heaven, reconcile us to all the Things of that high Estate ; that so we may not drudge in the World, nor act in a slavish Spirit in ways of Religion ; but that we may serve Thee with Ingenuity of Mind, with Freedom of Spirit, as those that are set at Liberty, and delivered from the Bondage and Slavery of Iniquity, having the Law of the Spirit of Life which is in Christ Jesus, making us free from the Law of Sin and Death.

3. Blessed God, we have cause Thankfully to acknowledge the Divine Goodness, for Thou hast loved our Souls from the Pit of Destruction ; Thou hast laid help for us upon one that is Mighty, and every ways  
able



## The Prayer.

Vol. I. able to save ; and hast declared thy Salvation, ( God in Christ reconciling the World unto himself, not imputing Trespases : ) Thou hast raised up for us a Prince and a Saviour to give Repentance to us, and Forgiveness of Sins. Now it is the Language of our Souls in the Ears of our God ; make us partakers of that Salvation which Thou hast appointed, and which our Saviour has wrought, and our Souls shall bless Thee to Eternity.

4. To this purpose bring us within the Terms of the Covenant of Grace, ( Repentance from dead Works, resolved Obedience in all things to God, and Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ ) and suffer us not herein to fail, or to fall short. Give us heartily and sincerely to revoke and undo whatsoever we have done amiss in Life ; to condemn our selves for doing those things ; to deprecate thy just Offence, and Displeasure ; to cry Thee Mercy ; to ask Thee Pardon ; and for all all time to come, to leave off to sin, and to return to our Duty.

5. And let us herein be Gainers by our former Losses, and miscarriages ; to make us more sensible of our Weakness and Inability, and of our necessary Dependence upon Thee our God : to be more thankful

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## The Prayer.

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*unto Thee for thy gracious Interposure, in Vol. I.  
preventing of us from running into those ~~~~~  
Evils, that we have not committed; to  
be modest and humble in the Sense of  
our former Miscarriages; to be cautious  
and wary, that in time to come we do  
not transgress; and to make us more Cha-  
ritable and Compassionate to our Brethren,  
that in many things may have failed as  
well as we.*

6. Give us carefully to hold the Head  
of the Church, and to make all due Acknow-  
ledgments to the Saviour of the Body  
Mystical; help us to conceive of him, for  
the height and Excellency of his Per-  
son; for the Worthiness and Fulness of  
his Undertaking, and Performance on  
our Behalf; according as we ought. Let  
us have that Dependence upon Him, that  
Expectation by Him, that Thou hast war-  
ranted us to have; and make that Use  
of Him, that Thou hast set Him up for;  
both that our Faith and Hope may final-  
ly rest in God; as also, that we may be  
planted into the Likeness of his Death by  
Mortification, Self-denial, Self-surrender;  
and may bear the Image of his Resurrection  
by Spirituality and Heavenly Mindedness;  
that so He may become a compleat Savi-  
our to us, we having Redemption through  
his

Vol. I. *his Blood, the forgiveness of Sins ; and the Renovation of our Natures , by the Operation of his good Spirit.*

7. Bring us, we humbly pray Thee, to the Truth of a Creature-state, Humility, and Modesty : Cloath our Minds with that Humility that befits Creatures, with that Modesty that becomes Sinners. Suffer us not to be vainly fraught, nor possessed ; to be giddily minded, or intoxicated with fond Conceits : O let us not live in a Lye, flatter our selves, deceiving our own Souls, promising that of our selves, or of any other Creature, that will not prove True.

Help us all along in Life to subordinate all the Affairs and Transactions of Time to serve the Interest of our Souls in the State that is before us. Help us to shake off this vain World, and to breath after Eternity, Immortality, and Glory ; being in perfect Reconciliation with the Law of everlasting Righteousness, Goodness, and Truth ; which are the Laws of Heaven : so shall we comply with thy Nature, Mind and Will, and fully answer the Relation we stand in to Thee. Relieve and ease our Consciences, by the Blood of Sprinkling, according to our several Conditions of Body, and Mind ; supply us with suitable Grace and Strength.

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8. We are, O Lord, thy Care and Vol. I.  
Charge, Thou undertakest for us, we confess and acknowledge that we are in nothing Self-sufficient: Not wise enough for our own Direction, not able enough for our own Defence, nor yet good enough for our own Satisfaction. We came into Being at thy Call; and we continue in Being at thy Maintenance and Allowance; and we shall go out of these Beings which now we have, at thine Apointment; and it will not be in our Power to withhold our Souls from Thee one moment, though the State and Welfare of them to all Eternity did depend thereupon.

9. Help us therefore to acknowledge Thee in all our Ways, and not to lean to our own Understandings. Teach us, Blessed God, so to number our days, as to apply our Hearts unto Wisdom; and to mind those things which are in Conjunction with our everlasting Welfare. Take us out of an earthly, and a worldly Spirit, and give us Senses spiritually exercised, that we may savour and relish, judge and discern the Ways and Things of God. O, let us be always under thy Communication and Influence, so in the Light of thy Countenance attract and draw us to thy self, and stay us with Thee, and suffer



Vol. I. *suffer us never to depart from Thee, upon any Temptation, Provocation, or Suggestion whatsoever.*

O Lord, communicate thy Light to our Minds, thy Life to our Souls; as Thou art Original to us by thy Creation of us, so be Thou also final by our Intention of Thee.

10. Go over the Workmanship of thy Creation in us again: To mend all the defects we have contracted, and to destroy out of us by the working of thy Grace and Spirit, whatsoever we have acquired unnatural to thy Creation of us. Transform us into the Image of thy Son, conform us to his likeness, make us Body and Soul an Habitation for thy Self, by thy Holy Spirit.

Make thy Son to us, all which Thou hast appointed Him to be unto Sinners. Make him to us Wisdom, that we who have played the fool by consenting to Iniquity, and giving our good God an Offence, may better understand our selves in the great Concernments of our Souls. Make Him to us Righteousness, that we may be out of Danger by reason of the deserved Punishment of our Sin. Make Him to us Sanctification, that we who have marred our Spirits and spoiled our Principles

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*Principles by unnatural Use, may inwardly be made whole, and renewed in the Spirit of our Minds. Make him to us Redemption, that we may be set at Liberty, and delivered from the Tyranny of Sin and Satan, who hath many times led us captive.*

II. We thank Thee for the happy Terms of the Covenant of Grace; Terms that are good in themselves, and fit for thy Creatures, such as our own Hearts cannot desire better, or other. For what is it that the Lord our God doth require of us, but only those things which are necessary to our everlasting Welfare? Neither hast Thou denied us any thing but what is for our Hurt and Prejudice. O, bring us unto thy good Terms, and suffer us not herein to fail, or fall short.

12. We bless Thee for that good Hand which Thou hast held over us by day and by night, at home and abroad, alone and in company; that Thou hast put away evil Things from us, and conferred many good Things upon us in great Kindness, Tenderness, and Compassion. For either the evil Things that threatned us have not come at all, or if they have come, they have not continued so long as

Vol. I. *we suspected, nor have been so great as we imagined; or else thou hast overruled them, subdued and turned them unto good: and for good Things, Thou hast even transcended our Hopes, and exceeded our Expectations. O, be thou endeared and recommended to us by thy Goodness, Kindness, and Faithfulness; and let us be engaged unto Thee in Duty and Affection; that so with Choice and Delight we may live to that God by whom we live.*

13. *We thank Thee, that we have the Use of our Reason and Understanding, in which many fail, that we have power of self Enjoyment, and taking Content in our Lives; that thou hast given us Power to choose and determine our selves; and that Thou hast permitted our Choice.*

*We acknowledge that if in any thing our Conditions are better or easier than the Conditions of those that are most miserable and necessitous, that herein the Goodness of the Lord our God hath been extended towards us; for we have used our selves as venturously, and run as many Hazards as others; and but for thy gracious Interposurè, we might have been as miserable as others.*

14. *Acquaint us, Blessed God, in this day of our exercise, Probation and Tryal*  
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*with the Employment of Eternity, (Con-Vol. I. conversation with our God by holy Meditation, by heavenly Ejaculations, by constant Intention of God, his Honour, and Service; by exact walking according to the Difference of Good and Evil; and by frequent Application to Thee by Prayer, and all other holy Exercises;) That so when these frail Bodies of ours shall fall away, and tumble into the Dust, and leave our Souls alone, and when there shall be no more either of bodily Employment, or Concernment: That our Souls may then readily adjoin themselves unto those immediate Attendants upon God, the Angels and Saints in Glory; and in that Blessed Consort spend Eternity, in singing Praises and Hallelujahs to that God, of whose Grace and Goodness we have had so great Experience all along in Life.*

15. *Help us so to order our Conversation in the World, so to govern our Spirits, and to lead such Lives, upon which we may safely dye; and when we shall come to leave the World, afford us such a mighty Power and Presence of thy own good Spirit, that we may have solid Consolation in Believing, and depart in the Faith of God's Elect. That we may escape the dreadful Pangs of Death, all Con-*



Vol. I. *sternation of Mind, all confusion of Thoughts, all Doubtfulness and Uncertainty concerning our Everlasting Condition; that so we may chearfully follow Thee into the Estate on the other side Death, of which thou hast given us so great Assurance by the Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath brought Life and Immortality to light by the Gospel, and who hath promised to change these our vile Bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious Body, according to the working of his mighty Power, by which he is able to subdue all things unto himself: And, Lord, give us in the mean time in Faith and Patience to possess our Souls.*

16. *We are daily admonished, as by Years growing upon some of us, so by Experience and Observation abroad every day, one or other taken away from our Society, Converse and Acquaintance; And sometimes Persons of fewer Years, and of greater Strength, and more likely to live than our selves: neither do we know how it comes to pass that we survive them; nor how long it will be, e're we shall follow them, nor yet what matter of Diseases may be gathering together, in these base and vile Bodies of ours, which though*

## The Prayer.

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*though we feel them not to day, may appear to morrow. Lord, keep us in Consideration hereof, and the Reference of Time to Eternity, to apply our Hearts unto Wisdom; and to mind those things that are in Conjunction with our everlasting Welfare.* Vol. I.

17. *and superadd this to all the Grace and Favour Thou hast shewn us all along in Life, not to remove us hence, but with all Advantage for Eternity; when we shall be in a due Preparation of Mind, in a holy Disposition of Soul, in a perfect Renunciation of the Guise of this mad and sinful World; when we shall be intirely Resigned up unto Thee our God; when we shall have clear Acts of Faith in God by Jesus Christ in our Souls; high and reverential Thoughts of Thee in our Minds; enlarged and enflamed Affections towards Thee.*

18. *Wherefore, Blessed God, consummate the Work of thy Grace which Thou hast begun in our Souls; Perfect the Cure thou hast begun upon our Minds; and then when Thou shalt have brought us to Glory, we who through our Earthlinefs, Carnality, and Folly, have been weary of a little Attendance upon Thee, in Time; shall think Eternity it self too streight and*

## The Prayer.

Vol. I. too narrow for us to bless and magnifie  
 so good a God, so well deserving at our  
 Hands.

19. Do good unto the whole World,  
 recover thy lapsed Creation, compassionate  
 the forlorn Condition of Mankind, lost in  
 themselves, and lost to God, through  
 Ignorance, Stupidity, and Senselessness,  
 where Persons have never been awakened;  
 through Superstition, Idolatry, and False-  
 worship, wherein many have been nursed  
 up and bred; through Atheism, Disso-  
 luteness, and Prophaneness, whereby they  
 have made havock of Conscience.

20. O, Let the Light of the Glorious  
 Gospel of Christ break forth and shine  
 throughout the whole World: Fulfil the  
 Promise Thou hast made unto the Messiah,  
 that Thou wilt give Him the Heathen  
 for his Inheritance, and the utmost Parts  
 of the Earth for his Possession: That  
 the Wolf shall dwell with the Lamb, and  
 that the Leopard shall lye down with the  
 Kid, the Calf and the young Lyon and the  
 Fatling together; that they shall not hurt  
 nor destroy in all thy holy Mountain: But  
 that there may be a perfect dwelling toge-  
 ther in Love, Harmony, and Reconciliati-  
 on with the whole Creation,

21. Re-



21. Reform all things amiss in these Vol. I.  
Kingdoms : Controul, Atheism, Irreligion  
and Prophaneness : Establish Peace, Truth,  
and Righteousness : Frustrate all naughty  
Designs : Suffer us not to be hurried back  
again to Popery, Superstition, or any  
false Worship ; but settle us in the Purity  
of our Religion, and our just Rights.

Restrain the Sons of Violence, that turn  
all into Confusion, and that make Havock  
and Desolation in the Family of God.

22. Direct him whom Thou hast plac-  
ed in the Throne, &c. Furnish him with  
all Divine Gifts and Graces that may san-  
ctifie his Soul here, and save him hereafter.  
Bless him and us in all his Royal Fami-  
ly, &c.

23. Compassionate all in Misery and Af-  
fliction ; especially such whose Cases we are  
acquainted with : Comfort, help, and re-  
store ; O Lord, be Thou a present Help to  
them in any needful time of Trouble : Such  
as lye upon sick Beds, direct those that are  
about them to proper and fit Means for their  
Recovery, and add thy Blessing : Take not  
them nor us out of this State, till Thou hast  
fitted and qualified us for the State of Im-  
mortality, Eternity and Glory.

24. Assist us now in the Service we are  
met to perform, that we beginning in the



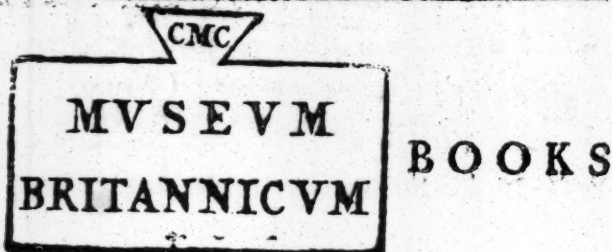
## The Prayer.

Vol. I. *Name and Fear of God, may be promoted by Divine Assistance, encouraged by thy Acceptance, and end in thy Glory, and the Advantage of our immortal Souls.*

*Grant that what shall be now spoken according to thy Will, may be received as from thy self, and turned to the Information of our Understandings, wherein any of us have been mistaken; the refining of our Spirits; the Right ordering the Actions of our Lives and Conversations; that God in all things may be glorified; and our Souls finally saved in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we are bold to call Thee Father, &c.*

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